THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of COUNTIES NACo

NATOA

April 16, 2026

Hon. Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington D.C. 20515

Hon. Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington D.C. 20515

Hon. Brett Guthrie
Chair, House Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2161 Rayburn HOB
Washington D.C. 20515

Hon. Frank Pallone
Ranking Member, Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2107 Rayburn HOB
Washington D.C. 20515

Hon. Virginia Foxx
Chair, House Committee on Rules
H-312, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Hon. Jim McGovern
Ranking Member, House Committee on Rules
H-152, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Opposition to H.R. 2289, the American Broadband Deployment Act of 2025

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Jeffries, Chair Foxx, Ranking Member McGovern, Chair Guthrie and Ranking Member Pallone:

On behalf of the nation's cities, counties, towns, and villages, the National Association of Counties (NACo), the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM), the National League of Cities, and the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA) write to strongly oppose H.R. 2289, the American Broadband Deployment Act of 2025 This legislation would undermine public safety, force local taxpayers to subsidize private corporations and disrupt the very broadband deployment progress it aims to accelerate.

The predominant cause of broadband permitting delays is not local government – it is -the federal permitting process. A substantial number of new broadband investments are in rural and remote communities, where projects are disproportionately delayed by permitting on federally-managed lands. This Congress has already recognized that problem – the House passed bipartisan legislation to expedite and improve permitting by federal agencies and on federal lands, which will do far more to accelerate BEAD-funded projects than imposing rigid mandates on local governments. H.R. 2289 does not address the actual bottleneck and instead micromanages the level of government that is actively working to get broadband built.

Local governments' broadband permitting and cable franchise functions facilitate safe, productive deployment in our public rights-of-way while protecting roads and residents from harm caused by poorly planned or executed construction. The local permitting process is an essential tool for avoiding unnecessary repairs and cost overruns – whether from staffing overtime or reduced infrastructure lifespan caused by multiple intrusions into the right-of-way. By imposing rigid federal "shot clocks" and restricting local authorities' ability to negotiate fair compensation for the use of public property, H.R. 2289 creates a framework that prioritizes communication companies' shareholder value at the expense of the safety and financial interests of the communities and the taxpayers they serve. Furthermore, by limiting cost-recovery mechanisms for application reviews, the bill effectively forces local taxpayers to subsidize private providers' administrative expenses – a cost that falls entirely on the public.

As our nation faces unprecedented advances in both artificial intelligence technology and federal investments in broadband infrastructure, local governments seek to be constructive partners and rely on local zoning and permitting authority to make thoughtful decisions. Communities throughout the country are actively determining what AI infrastructure looks like in their communities. These zoning and permitting authorities enable cities, towns, and counties to make smarter decisions that create economic benefits for their communities and respect citizens' concerns. In the rare instances where a local government truly obstructs deployment in the case of telecommunications infrastructure, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) already possesses sufficient authority to intervene under Sections 253 and 332 of the Communications Act of 1996.

The Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) program is on the verge of shovel-to-ground implementation. Across every state, local governments have partnered with state broadband offices to establish workable timelines, build review capacity and enable safe, coordinated deployments. These partnerships took years to develop and reflect a diversity of needs across urban, suburban and rural communities. Introducing sweeping new, onerous federal mandates now would undo those agreements and delay deployment in rural and underserved communities that need connectivity the most.

Local governments are committed to getting broadband built – quickly, safety and in ways that serve our communities. However, H.R. 2289 as written, would sacrifice local autonomy, impose unfunded mandates and dsirupt deployment progress already underway. We urge Congress to prioritize local decision-making while balancing the need for deployment of high-speed broadband in communities across the country.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tom Cochran
CEO and Executive Director
The United States Conference of Mayors

Matthew D. Chase
CEO/Executive Director
The National Association of Counties

Clarence Anthony
CEO and Executive Director
National League of Cities

Tonya Rideout
Executive Director
The National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors

Cc: Hon. Richard Hudson, Chair, House Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Hon. Doris Matsui, Ranking Member, House Subcommittee on Communications and Technology

If you have any questions, please contact:

The **National League of Cities (NLC)** is the voice of America's cities, towns and villages, representing more than 200 million people. NLC works to strengthen local leadership, influence federal policy and drive innovative solutions. Contact: Angelina Panettieri, Legislative Director for Information Technology and Communications, at 202-626-3196 or panettieri@nlc.org.

The **United States Conference of Mayors (USCM)** is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,400 such cities in the country today. Each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor. Contact: David W. Burns, Assistant Executive Director, at 202-861-6765 or dburns@usmayors.org.

The **National Association of Counties (NACo)** provides essential services to the nation's 3,069 counties, serving nearly 40,000 county elected officials and 3.6 million county employees. Since 1935, NACo unites county officials to advocate county priorities in federal policymaking and optimize county and taxpayer resources and cost savings while promoting exemplary county policies and practices. Contact: Seamus Dowdall, Legislative Director, Telecommunications & Technology, at 202-942-4212 or sdowdall@naco.org.

The **National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors' (NATOA)** is the local government association supporting our members by advocating for broadband deployment, digital equity, cable and telecommunications services, consumer protection, Public, Educational and Governmental Access (PEG) Television, public safety communications and the preservation of local authority in our public rights of way (PROW). Contact: Mike Lynch, Legislative Affairs Director, 617-327-8066 or MLynch@NATOA.org.