



NEWS

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
July 20, 2010

NEWS MEDIA CONTACT:
Mark Wigfield, 202-418-0253
Email: mark.wigfield@fcc.gov

FCC FINDS 14 TO 24 MILLION AMERICANS LACK ACCESS TO BROADBAND *Underscores Need to Pursue Recommendations of National Broadband Plan*

Washington, D.C. – In response to a Congressional directive to inquire whether broadband “is being deployed to all Americans in a reasonable and timely fashion,” the FCC concluded in its Sixth Broadband Deployment Report that between 14 and 24 million Americans still lack access to broadband, and the immediate prospects for deployment to them are bleak. This report underscores the need for comprehensive reform of the Universal Service Fund, innovative approaches to unleashing new spectrum, and removal of barriers to infrastructure investment.

In an era when broadband has become essential for U.S. jobs, economic growth, global competitiveness, and democratic engagement, millions of Americans live in areas without broadband. Many of these Americans are poor or live in rural areas that will remain unserved without reform of the universal service program and other changes to U.S. broadband policy that spur investment in broadband networks by lowering the cost of deployment.

The report concludes that the goal of universal availability – deployment to *all* Americans – is not being met in a timely way, and proposes to address key recommendations from the FCC’s National Broadband Plan to connect all Americans as quickly as possible, including:

- Reforming the FCC’s universal service programs to support broadband through public-private partnerships;
- Unleashing spectrum for mobile broadband;
- Reducing barriers to infrastructure investment, including delays in access to poles and rights-of-way;
- Collecting better broadband data to assist policymakers and consumers.

The report also takes the long-overdue step of updating a key standard – speed – used to determine whether households are served by broadband. It upgrades the standard from 200 kilobits per second downstream, a standard set over a decade ago when web pages were largely text-based, to 4 megabits per second (Mbps) downstream and 1 Mbps upstream. This is a minimum speed generally required for using today’s video-rich broadband applications and services, while retaining sufficient capacity for basic web browsing and e-mail. The Commission’s standard will evolve over time.

Commonly known as the “706 Report,” the report includes for the first time a comprehensive list of unserved areas, compiled from data not previously available to the FCC. Future reports will benefit from continued improvements in broadband data.

Action by the Commission, July 16, 2010, by Report (FCC 10-129). Chairman Genachowski and Commissioners Copps and Clyburn issuing separate statements; Commissioners McDowell and Baker dissenting and issuing separate statements.

Docket Nos: GN 09-137, GN 09-51

-FCC-

News about the Federal Communications Commission can also be found on the Commission’s website www.fcc.gov.