

IN SUPPORT OF MUNICIPAL BROADBAND

WHEREAS, since its inception, the Internet has existed based on principles of freedom and openness, core values that have made it the most powerful communication medium ever known; and

WHEREAS, affordable, reliable access to high speed broadband is critical to U.S. economic growth and competitiveness; and

WHEREAS, in many markets that remain underserved by traditional private-sector Internet Service Providers (ISPs), hundreds of towns and cities across the country have developed or are developing their own municipal broadband networks; and

WHEREAS, according to a report by the White House in January 2015, nearly forty percent of American households either cannot purchase a fixed 10 Mbps connection or must buy it from a single provider, and three out of four Americans do not have a choice between providers for Internet speeds at 25 Mbps.

WHEREAS, currently, some twenty states enforce laws that ban or restrict the development on municipal broadband networks; and

WHEREAS, on February 26, 2015, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted 3-2 to preempt state laws preventing the cities of Chattanooga, Tennessee and Wilson, North Carolina from expanding their municipal broadband networks, on the grounds that those state laws conflict with Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996; and

WHEREAS, in the words of FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler, who voted in favor of preemption, “[Our decision] sends a clear message: Communities should be able to determine their own paths to meet their constituents’ needs,”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that The United States Conference of Mayors applauds the FCC, under the leadership of Chairman Tom Wheeler, for preempting state barriers to municipal broadband service, which have served as a significant limitation to competition in the provision of Internet access; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that The United States Conference of Mayors encourages Congress and the Administration to pursue all legislative and regulatory avenues to allow cities and communities maximum flexibility in constructing their own broadband networks.

Projected Cost: Unknown