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Broad, Diverse Group of Organizations Issues a Call to Action for a National Broadband Strategy

(Washington, DC) On December 2, 2008, at an event in the U.S. Senate's Dirksen Office Building, a broad and diverse array of organizations concerned about America's economic future released a Call to Action that provides President-elect Obama and the incoming Congress a policy framework for a comprehensive national broadband strategy.

The group includes many prominent communications providers, high technology companies, manufacturers, consumer groups, labor unions, public interest groups, educators, state and local governments, utilities, content creators, foundations, and other stakeholders in America's broadband future. These organizations believe that such a strategy is critical to America's economic vitality, educational opportunity, public safety, energy efficiency, environmental stability, global competitiveness, and a continuing high quality of life.

Copies of the Call to Action statement and a list of the current signatories are attached. They will also be available at the group's website, www.bb4us.net, and on the New America Foundations web page for this event, <http://tinyurl.com/58lxhw>.

Speakers at the event included the group's founder, Jim Baller, Senior Principal, the Baller Herbst Law Group; Jim Cicconi, Senior Executive Vice President for External and Legislative Affairs, AT&T; Larry Cohen, President of Communications Workers of America; Rick Whitt, Washington Telecom and Media Counsel, Google, Inc.; Ben Scott, Director of Policy, Free Press; Grant Seiffert, President, Telecommunications Industry Association; Charles Benton, President, The Benton Foundation; Mark Luker, Vice President, EDUCAUSE; Robert Atkinson, Ph. D, President, Information Technology and Innovation Foundation; and Libby Beaty, Executive Director, National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors. The two panels were moderated by Kenneth Peres, Ph.D, Economist, Communications Workers of America, and President, Alliance for Public Technology, and Diane Duffy, Executive Director, Business Development, Telcordia Technologies, Inc.

In the Call to Action, the groups state that the United States urgently needs a comprehensive national broadband strategy, because broadband is becoming as important to the United States as canals, railroads, electricity, telephones, and highways were in the last two centuries. The Call to Action sets forth a policy framework that includes goals and policies to stimulate broadband adoption, use, and accountability. It concludes with a commitment of the signatories to continue to work together to address key issues and priorities and to hold an event to present more specific recommendations to President Obama, Congress and the American People.

“What's most remarkable about this initiative is that so large and diverse a group of organizations agreed not only on the terms of our Call to Action statement, but also to continue to work together to build consensus on the substance of a national broadband strategy,” said Jim Baller.

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