

March 15, 2010

The Honorable Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

We eagerly await the release of the Commission's National Broadband Plan in the coming days and wish to extend our appreciation for the FCC's efforts to conduct as thorough a review as possible.

Broadband is critical to America's long-term economic and social well-being. As you have said, a safe and secure broadband is the infrastructure that will ensure America's continued global leadership, keep the best jobs in the United States and tackle our most pressing national challenges. Yet, as your recent survey shows, almost 100 million Americans do not have broadband at home.

It is critical that we have a smart, effective national blueprint to bring affordable broadband to every person and business in the United States. Our nation needs a plan that emphasizes private investment and clear targets for government action.

The FCC should be commended for the extraordinary public process implemented to develop this plan. Your team has worked countless hours, solicited unprecedented volumes of feedback from all stakeholders, and determined that data, not ideology, should guide their analysis. This process has demonstrated that there are still significant policy obstacles that could stifle innovation and investment in the future. This national plan must provide a roadmap for overcoming these obstacles.

To be a success, the plan must identify new spectrum for wireless broadband, so that the United States can lead the world in mobile innovation and technology. The plan must revise outdated regulation to redirect subsidy programs to support affordable access to broadband in fair and efficient ways, revise intercarrier compensation rules to promote investment in broadband, and provide easier access to rights of way to promote deployment.

These steps will stimulate world-leading networks and ensure every American has access to affordable broadband. This is critical: As society increasingly moves online, the costs of digital exclusion grow as well. Your team has noted that 70 percent of students use the Internet to do homework, putting those without access at a serious disadvantage. Job searching and training are now online activities, but many who need the most help with searching and training lack the digital skills to use these new tools. The plan must set out ways that increase adoption through creative solutions to bring all stakeholders together to address the barriers to adoption, such as digital literacy.

Further, the plan must show how broadband can be put to work to drive improved government performance, just as private sector enterprises have done in using information communications technology to better serve their missions. Broadband can enable a network that allows all first-responders to communicate in times of crisis, an electric smart grid that increases our energy independence, lower health care costs through telemedicine, remote monitoring, and electronic health records, and improved educational outcomes. The plan must identify how to eliminate the policy and practical barriers to these goals so we can optimize the value of broadband for our economy and society.

We are encouraged by early reports about the FCC's national plan. While it has not yet been released and we may ultimately not agree on all of its recommendations, we believe it is in the national interest to assess the plan as a whole, and to take it seriously. We anticipate that it will offer a coherent and substantive focus for public policy, and we urge all stakeholders to approach it in a constructive and collaborative spirit. We also urge you and others in government to move quickly to implement its most essential recommendations. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Paul Sagan
President and CEO
Akamai Technologies

Jennifer Floren
Founder and CEO
Experience

Robert Abernethy
President
American Standard Development Company

John McAdam
President, CEO & Director
F5 Networks

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Michael Dell
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Micron Technologies

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