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Major Metro Cities, Mayors Call For National Broadband Action

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The United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) on Monday, June 23, unanimously passed a resolution calling for broadband deployment action at the national level. The resolution was co-sponsored by Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino, Chicago Mayor Richard Daley, San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom and Miami Mayor Manny Diaz and calls on the Administration, the U.S. Congress and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to develop a national broadband policy that makes high speed internet connections to cities a national imperative. The resolution also called for measures to preserve the ability of local governments to provide broadband services within their communities.

In passing this resolution, the Mayors noted that the United States was the birthplace of the Internet. In the 1990s, the United States was the undisputed leader in broadband adoption and technology innovation. However, since 2001, the United States has plunged from fourth place in the world in per capita broadband adoption to as low as 19th place in some surveys

Mayor Menino applauded USCM for adopting this broadband resolution call to action. "I have become keenly aware that the incumbent broadband providers are deploying high speed broadband service at an increasingly rapid pace in suburban areas but have severely neglected deployment in cities. This resolution shows that Boston and other major cities will not stand silent and be left in the internet slow lane."

"In the 21st century economy, broadband is an essential service for everyone. Just as every resident wants high-quality, public transportation, water, sewer and other critical infrastructure, they also need to have access to an advanced digital infrastructure," said Mayor Richard M. Daley.

Mayor Newsom stated: "Broadband is critical to the health of our local economies and our ability to compete on a global basis. The Brookings Institution has estimated that the nation's broadband decline could lead to a potential loss of \$1 trillion in economic productivity over the next decade, as well as more than 1.2 million jobs that could be created by better broadband. Mayors across the country are united in calling on the next administration to put America in the fast lane."

President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, Miami Mayor Manny Diaz said: "The digital literacy of city residents is essential to the future sustainability of our cities. If we are to bridge the digital divide in the United States in a sustainable way, a way that ensures that all our citizens benefit and contribute to the 21st century economy, we need our national leaders joining with cities and towns to ensure deployment of broadband across America."

Finally, Massachusetts Congressman Ed Markey, Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet said: "I congratulate the U.S. Conference of Mayors for calling for a national broadband policy that ensures all Americans have access to 21st Century internet speeds. Reclaiming America's worldwide leadership in this area will take unprecedented cooperation between all levels of government, the private sector, and community-based organizations."

In conjunction with USCM's passage of the resolution, the Mayors of Boston, San Francisco and Chicago released a study by Civitium: "The Future of Municipal Broadband: Business, Technology and Public Policy Implications for Major U.S. Cities." Civitium's report outlines ways in which, despite recent market reversals, wireless technologies can be used to provide value to local governments and urban communities even as cities press for a national policy that will insure deployment of high speed "big broadband" in their cities and across the US. Civitium's report is available for download at www.civitium.com/MBMA.

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