



## Congress of the United States House of Representatives

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### **REPS. BOUCHER AND UPTON INTRODUCE “COMMUNITY BROADBAND ACT OF 2007”**

Washington, DC – House Energy and Commerce Committee Members Rick Boucher (D-VA) and Fred Upton (R-MI) today introduced the Community Broadband Act of 2007 to encourage the deployment of high speed networks by preserving the ability of local governments to offer community broadband infrastructure and services.

**“We should be doing all that we can to encourage the deployment of high speed networks, particularly where broadband service is unavailable. If commercial broadband providers are not willing to deploy in particular areas, local governments should be able to step in and fill the gap. And yet in many states, local governments are barred from this market or must offer broadband service subject to unrealistic restrictions,”** said Boucher. **“The Community Broadband Act of 2007, which we introduce today, would preserve the ability of local governments to offer community broadband infrastructure and services to their citizens by prohibiting States from barring their ability to do so.”**

**“By partnering with private industry, community broadband networks offer the promise of increased economic development and job creation, nowhere is that more important than in my home state of Michigan,”** said Upton. **“At the end of the day, we will foster even more competition and choices for consumers across the nation. Moreover, these networks will help promote our homeland security. In the wake of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma, we have seen just how critical it is to have reliability of communications systems that can be used by police, fire, and EMS departments. In the future, these locally deployed technologies can help first responders, volunteers, and local governments react quickly to disasters, particularly when old ways of communicating no longer work.”**

**“Yet, fourteen States have passed legislation to prohibit or significantly restrict the ability of local governments to offer broadband services, and more States are considering similar legislation. The Community Broadband Act of 2007 responds to such State actions by prohibiting States from barring local governments from providing broadband capability and services,”** Boucher added.

The legislation also includes competitive safeguards to ensure that public providers cannot abuse governmental authority to discriminate against private competitors and ensures that the public has information to evaluate prospective broadband projects.

Congressmen Boucher and Upton look forward to working with their colleagues on the House Energy and Commerce Committee and in the Congress to enact this measure into law. Similar legislation was introduced in the Senate this month by Senators Lautenberg, Smith, Kerry, McCain, McCaskill, Snowe, Stevens and Inouye.