



1100 G STREET, NW, SUITE 800  
WASHINGTON, DC 20005

The Honorable Roger Wicker  
555 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
511 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Wicker and Ranking Member Cantwell:

Small businesses are the engine of America's economy. But Main Street simply will not run without broadband and voice communication services.

INCOMPAS, the Internet and competitive networks association, writes to urge you and the Senate Commerce Committee members to support the Keeping Critical Business Connections Emergency Fund bill to ensure networks supporting the Main Street economy do not suffer during the COVID-19 pandemic, and are strengthened to enable a faster economic recovery.

The need for broadband connectivity has only increased during the pandemic. Broadband and voice networks have continued to operate during the pandemic, connecting consumers and businesses to health information and services, distance learning education, and remote working capabilities.

But no network is an island, and critical infrastructure funded by the business marketplace has seen a significant decline in revenues. While millions of small businesses currently cannot pay their connectivity bills, America's broadband builders have stepped up to help by supporting the FCC's Keep Americans Connected pledge.

The majority of broadband providers are small businesses themselves, serving friends, neighbors, schools, and hospitals in local communities where they live and work. As of today, over 700 companies and associations have signed the pledge where they have committed, among other things, to not cutting off residential and small business customers who cannot pay their broadband and communications bills due to the pandemic.

Loss in small business revenue hurts the entire broadband ecosystem, which depends on the ability of networks to connect and support traffic. In addition, loss of business revenue will impact deployment goals and the race to 5G with China.

Emergency connectivity funding for small businesses has broad support. A recent letter signed by over 218 consumer and public interest organizations states: "Congress must include policies

that support broadband availability, including increased funding for adoption, network sustainability, and deployment for areas still lacking access, in upcoming stimulus packages.”

As Congress targets legislation to ensure low-income families, school children, and patients stay connected, we strongly encourage you to provide emergency assistance to small businesses providing broadband and communications as well. Congress should create an emergency connectivity fund to enable providers who are under duress to seek necessary, conditioned funding so that they can continue operating and serving their customers. There would be qualifications and limitations on the funding, including the requirements to keep customers connected. We ask Congress to acknowledge the role that broadband and communications providers continue to play during the pandemic. The goal of the emergency fund is to protect critical small businesses, their employees, and the entire economy that is relying upon these networks and services.

I look forward to working with the Committee through the legislative process to develop the resources to keep businesses connected during this crisis and the economic recovery as we move forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chip Pickering". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chip Pickering  
CEO