

House Resolution No. 6027

By Committee on Energy and Utilities

5-2

1 A RESOLUTION urging modifications to the National Broadband Plan for
2 the benefit of rural residents of Kansas.

3 WHEREAS, Residents of this state living in rural areas deserve and
4 expect the same high-quality, affordable communications services that are
5 available to their urban neighbors; and

6 WHEREAS, Similar to businesses in urban areas, rural businesses,
7 farmers and ranchers compete in the global marketplace and depend on
8 affordable access to robust broadband services to market and sell their
9 products around the world; and

10 WHEREAS, Children living in rural areas should have the same
11 educational opportunities as their urban counterparts, and high-speed
12 internet access is absolutely necessary to allow these students
13 opportunities for advanced learning through distance education; and

14 WHEREAS, Residents living in rural areas face unique health care
15 challenges because of the distances that must be traveled to seek basic and
16 advanced medical care, and telemedicine delivered via broadband
17 networks can improve the health of rural residents by reducing the time
18 and travel needed for high-quality health care; and

19 WHEREAS, Many rural areas encounter significant challenges in
20 pursuing and sustaining economic development plans that bring quality,
21 higher-paying jobs to their communities, and insufficiently robust
22 broadband speeds will further hamper the economic development needs of
23 many rural communities; and

24 WHEREAS, The United States Department of Agriculture has
25 rightfully placed significant importance on the need for broadband access
26 in rural America to improve quality of life and economic development; and

27 WHEREAS, Communications providers that serve this state's rural
28 areas have worked diligently to ensure that their consumers have access to
29 affordable and reliable broadband services and have utilized the United
30 States Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service loan and grant
31 programs for economic development; and

32 WHEREAS, Contrary to the progress rural communications providers
33 have had in deploying broadband, the Federal Communications
34 Commission is embarking on a National Broadband Plan that will
35 negatively impact the ability of residents living in rural areas of this state
36 to realize the true benefits of access to robust broadband speeds by

1 limiting support to four megabits per second in rural, high-cost areas of the
2 country, while calling for one hundred million urban homes to have access
3 to broadband speeds at 100 megabits per second by 2020; and

4 WHEREAS, The National Broadband Plan runs counter to the federal
5 universal service policy which ensures access to communications services
6 at comparable rates regardless of the consumer's location: Now, therefore,

7 *Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of Kansas:*
8 That we challenge the Federal Communications Commission to make
9 substantive change to the National Broadband Plan so that the plan
10 develops a universal service support mechanism that ensures
11 accountability, promotes stability, provides efficient and effective
12 incentives for broadband network deployment and operation and
13 encourages broadband adoption by keeping broadband service affordable.
14 The plan should also ensure high-quality service by linking funding to
15 satisfying reasonable, but meaningful, carrier of last resort obligations.
16 Consistent with the universal service principles in federal law, the plan
17 should ensure that rural and urban consumers pay reasonably comparable
18 rates for reasonably comparable services by providing adequate support in
19 high-cost areas; and

20 *Be it further resolved:* That we urge the members of the Kansas
21 Congressional Delegation, the Secretary of the United States Department
22 of Agriculture and the Administrator of the Rural Utilities Service to work
23 with the Federal Communications Commission to ensure that
24 commissioners understand the importance of robust broadband
25 deployment to rural Americans and how the current draft of the National
26 Broadband Plan needs to be dramatically altered to ensure quality
27 broadband service availability throughout the country; and

28 *Be it further resolved:* That the Chief Clerk of the House of
29 Representatives be directed to provide an enrolled copy of this resolution
30 to the commissioners of the Federal Communications Commission, the
31 members of the Kansas Congressional Delegation, the Secretary of the
32 United States Department of Agriculture, the Administrator of the Rural
33 Utilities Service, the Chief Technology Officer in the White House Office
34 of the Science and Technology Policy and the Governor of Kansas.