



COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY & COMMERCE
DEMOCRATS
RANKING MEMBER FRANK PALLONE, JR.

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Pallone Remarks at Broadband Infrastructure Hearing

Washington, DC – *Energy and Commerce Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) delivered the following opening remarks today at a Subcommittee on Communications and Technology hearing titled “Closing the Digital Divide: Broadband Infrastructure Solutions.”*

One year ago, President Trump promised us a trillion dollar infrastructure package that would bring Democrats and Republicans together. And for our part, in May of last year Committee Democrats introduced a [comprehensive infrastructure package](#) across all areas of this Committee’s jurisdiction. Yet, here we are, hours from the State of the Union, without serious legislation from the President. All we have are some back of the napkin proposals from House Republicans that completely conflict with the plan just leaked out of the White House.

In stark contrast, Committee Democrats developed a legislative proposal to build the type of modern, resilient infrastructure Americans need and deserve. At a time when our nation’s infrastructure is either crumbling or in desperate need of modernization, it’s time we make real and significant investments for the future.

The LIFT America Act authorizes \$40 billion for the deployment of secure and resilient broadband. It would also provide over \$22 billion for drinking water infrastructure, over \$17 billion for modern, efficient, and resilient energy infrastructure, over \$3 billion for healthcare infrastructure, and almost \$3 billion for brownfields redevelopment.

The LIFT America Act puts real dollars where they are needed, creating jobs, revitalizing communities, and addressing serious threats to human health and the environment. It would address lead in school drinking water, fund medical facilities in Indian Country, reduce carbon emissions, and improve our resilience to the impacts of climate change. And it would do all that without rolling back environmental safeguards as we are now hearing is a major component of the President’s plan.

When it comes to broadband, we have also put forward additional, thoughtful proposals, building on the strong foundation of the LIFT America Act. Our bills would ensure we’re

investing in our infrastructure efficiently, basing our decision on good data, and reaching urban, rural, and tribal lands.

Over the last couple of weeks, we have seen bipartisan and bicameral agreement that we need dedicated funding to improve access to broadband nationwide. Yet, despite this rare consensus, Republicans on this Committee have decided to unveil a series of partisan bills that don't address the real problems. But these bills are worse than simply window dressing. They turn bipartisan agreements on their head, unnecessarily pitting urban versus rural, industry versus local governments, and broadband access versus our environment. The Republican proposals will not improve broadband deployment, but will hurt workers and the economy.

I appreciate Republicans scheduling a hearing on broadband deployment and including some Democratic proposals, but I'm concerned that the Majority is simply trying to jam too much into this one hearing. Seven witnesses discussing 25 bills will not help the American public understand these proposals, let alone the members of this Committee. What's more, we do not even have the relevant agencies here to help us understand how they will interpret the often conflicting directions included in the Republican bills.

We are now a little over year into this Administration, and all Washington Republicans have to show the American people in this Subcommittee's purview are a check-the-box hearing designed to paper over the Republicans' failure on infrastructure; their erosion of our privacy rights; and their elimination of net neutrality. When it comes to governing, this Subcommittee is falling short.

Thank you.

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