

**Statement of Representative Anna G. Eshoo**  
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology  
House Committee on Energy and Commerce  
“ARRA Broadband Spending”  
2322 Rayburn House Office Building  
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Thank you Mr. Chairman. I welcome our witnesses and thank them for appearing before our panel today.

I welcome oversight of BTOP and BIP because it's always important to root out problems and find solutions. We need a thorough understanding of the obstacles that the applicants and awardees face in gaining access to and utilizing the money. We have to ensure the program is efficient and effective because the consequences for our nation, our economy, and our future are critical.

The U.S. invented the Internet, but today we are falling behind in broadband deployment, and by some measure, we're now ranked 15<sup>th</sup> in the world. We'll need significant investment from both the public and private sectors to close the gaps, increase broadband affordability and ensure Americans have access to the highest speeds and latest technology. That's why I strongly advocated more than two years ago, for Recovery Act funding to expand broadband deployment, because I believe America should be number one in technology and we need to

make the investment to do so. If the U.S. could build the transcontinental railroad in the 1800's, we can certainly do this.

Two years ago, a study predicted that adding 30 million new broadband lines would raise U.S. GDP by over \$110 billion. Others have specifically examined the benefits of broadband stimulus, concluding that a \$10 billion investment in broadband networks could support an estimated 498,000 new or retained U.S. jobs for a year.

Like the building of our nation's interstate highway system, this transformation will not come overnight. Recovery Act dollars have begun making their way into communities across the nation. When completed, these projects will have a critical impact on community anchor institutions such as public safety first responders, schools, libraries and public health facilities, as well as small businesses and directly into homes around the country. We need to ensure we're doing everything we can to quickly get these funds out to the communities that so desperately need them.

NTIA and RUS have undertaken a major task in administering their respective programs. Along the way, there have been some bumps in the road, some of which

I've raised in past hearings, and in letters to the NTIA Administrator. These challenges are to be expected with a multi-year program supporting the build-out of large, complex infrastructure projects. But we must meet these challenges head-on, and not take them as a sign that the overall program is flawed.

We have an opportunity to strengthen these programs and I'm committed to ensuring the continued success of BTOP and BIP. Proper oversight of BTOP and BIP will ensure federal money is used towards its intended purpose: expanding broadband deployment. When problems are identified, let's find solutions, not point blame.

It's clear our future depends upon the ubiquitous and rapid deployment of broadband. The Recovery Act funding is the first step in this process, but there's much more work to be done to ensure America's leadership on broadband.

Thank you for being here today and I look forward to your testimony.