

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, May 13, 2010

CONTACT: MARA LEE

(202) 225-7163

**Rep. Matsui Participates in Broadband Adoption Hearing**

*Calls for Colleagues to Support Her Broadband Affordability Act; Welcomes Sacramento Witness Rivkah Sass*

**WASHINGTON, DC** – This morning, Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (D-Sacramento) participated in the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, and the Internet Hearing examining the progress of and plans for the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to promote broadband adoption through their National Broadband Plan.

A central recommendation proposed in the National Broadband Plan is the inclusion of expanding “Lifeline/Link-up” for universal broadband adoption in its proposed reforms to Universal Service Fund (USF.) This recommendation mirrors legislation Representative Matsui introduced last year, H.R. 3646, the Broadband Affordability Act.

Rep. Matsui also took the opportunity to welcome her constituent, Rivkah Sass, who testified before the Subcommittee in her role as the Director of the Sacramento Public Library Authority.

Rep. Matsui’s opening statement, as prepared for delivery is below:

“Chairman Boucher, thank you for calling today’s hearing. I would like to welcome our witnesses. And I would specifically like to welcome Rivkah Sass, who also happens to be one of my constituents, and Director of the Sacramento Public Library Authority.

“Rivkah has done an outstanding job modernizing the Sacramento public library system, and has been a leading advocate for expanding fast-speed broadband access to anchor institutions in our community. It is great that you are here with us and I look forward to hearing from you today.

“Although there is a lot of talk today about the FCC, I believe there is broad agreement on both sides of the aisle on this Committee that broadband adoption is critical to our future economic well-being and security. In today’s economy, the internet has become a necessity, not a luxury. If you don’t have it, you are simply at a competitive disadvantage.

“Unfortunately, millions of Americans, particularly in these tough economic times, simply can’t

afford the high-cost of in-home broadband service - and are on the wrong side of the digital divide.

“Several prominent studies by Pew, PPI California, and the FCC have strongly suggested that broadband adoption rates are largely associated with income levels and the high cost of broadband services. In fact, the FCC found that 28 million Americans do not subscribe because of affordability barriers.

“Last September, I introduced H.R. 3646, the Broadband Affordability Act, which would expand the Universal Service Fund ‘Lifeline Assistance’ Program for universal broadband adoption. It will ensure that all Americans living in urban and rural areas all have access to affordable broadband services. I applaud the FCC for including my proposal as a central recommendation in the National Broadband Plan. And it is my hope that any reforms to USF address broadband affordability barriers.

“I also believe - as Rivkah stated in her testimony - that anchor institutions play a critical role in providing access to broadband services. Last fall, I, along with Representatives Eshoo and Markey, urged NTIA to prioritize second round Recovery Act funding for anchor institutions broadband adoption projects. And I look forward to working with my colleagues on finding ways to continue to increase broadband adoption rates across the country.”

###