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Congresswoman Doris Matsui Urges Prioritization of Broadband Access for Community Centers

Reps. Matsui, Eshoo, Markey Co-Sign Letter to Obama Administration

WASHINGTON, DC – Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-05) is urging the Obama Administration to prioritize funding for broadband infrastructure made possible by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) for essential “anchor institutions,” sending a letter today to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) in a call to action. Anchor institutions provide access to vital educational and medical services, and allow lower-income Americans, especially in urban areas, access to broadband technology at no or minimal cost to the consumer.

Congresswoman Matsui initiated the letter, signed by her colleagues Representatives Anna Eshoo (CA-14) and Edward Markey (MA-07), to NTIA as a follow-up to their lines of questioning in a recent Subcommittee hearing, and to ensure their concerns are addressed. The House Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, and the Internet oversight hearing took place on September 10, 2009, and included testimony by Lawrence Strickling, Assistant Secretary for Communications, who has jurisdiction over ARRA broadband rule-making and allocation.

“It is important that we continue to fund anchor institutions in underserved areas to help our communities grow,” said Rep. Matsui. “Broadband access provides supportive technology for households, schools, libraries, and health facilities in my hometown of Sacramento and in communities across the country. In the current economic climate, more and more hard working families need access to the internet to find a new job manage their finances during this difficult period obtain news alerts and apply to college.”

The Matsui/Eshoo/Markey letter states that “Anchor institutions are essential to providing broadband access to unserved and underserved populations unable to maintain computer service in individual homes because of financial or technological impediments. They also

provide essential educational and medical services to millions of Americans each day.”

“Building high-capacity broadband pipes will have transformative impact on local communities,” the letter continues. “It will create jobs through the deployment of these technologies, allow our school children to obtain a better education deliver of high-quality health care at a lower cost, improve job-training centers at community colleges and libraries, and enhance public safety. Bringing high-capacity broadband to a neighborhood school or library will also make it much easier to ultimately serve the residential users and businesses in those neighborhoods.”

The distinguished Members of Congress also expressed concern that previous grant and assistance programs have not been accessible to these institutions. “Unfortunately, it has come to our attention that many of these community anchor institutions do not fit within the categories established by the BTOP application rules. The application rules also adopt a definition of broadband that falls far short of the kind of high-capacity broadband needed by these institutions. As a result, many community anchor institutions did not even apply for broadband funding, and those that did apply noted that they found the application process to be confusing, complicated and discouraging.”

A copy of the letter sent today can be found here: [9.17.09 Matsui/Eshoo/Markey Letter to N TIA](#)

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