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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

STEVE ISRAEL
Second District, New York

August 2, 2012

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Spectator

The Honorable Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

The Honorable Eric H. Holder
United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Chairman Genachowski and Attorney General Holder:

Thank you for your commitment to expanding broadband access and adoption in America. I share your belief that these investments can drive innovation and American job growth. I support the pending transaction between Verizon and the cable companies, which among other things, allows Verizon to purchase additional spectrum to improve service in populated communities like the ones I represent. Consumers in my district have asked about the impact on universal access to high-speed broadband. I am very supportive of additional private and public investment in broadband build-outs for a variety of reasons.

Competition in broadband is important to ensure that Americans access to high-quality service at low competitive rates. Broadband access is not a luxury. It is a necessity in the modern world. Families need broadband for their children's education, for their jobs and for every day household needs. To prevent a vast digital divide, we need choice of service and affordable options. I believe we need increased investment in both wireless and wire line broadband. There is insufficient spectrum for the type of downloading that consumers now expect on their phones, tablets and other devices. Therefore, we need wireless spectrum *and* broadband.

Moreover, given the President's focus on cybersecurity, I am particularly concerned about the importance of continued build-out of wired networks specifically in Metropolitan areas like New York. As you know, New York is uniquely positioned on this front—a fact reflected in the comments recently submitted by New York State's Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration within

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your Department. A key element of their feedback was the State's Office of Cyber Security focus on broadband initiatives that include a strong wired network.

Finally, in a recession we cannot place enough emphasis on the importance of jobs. A recent report estimated that continued build-out of Verizon's FiOS, the largest of the Fiber to the Premise (FTTP) providers, could create 72,000 jobs. That is nearly as many jobs as our entire economy created in June of this year. Given that, the importance of incentivizing and sustaining growth in broadband build-outs cannot be overstated. Investing in and building-out wireless and wire line broadband networks not only creates jobs but will ensure that our country has the networks to compete in the future. I ask that you work to create an environment that encourages broadband providers to continue to build out their networks.

For all these reasons, I believe it is important to take this opportunity, while the spectrum deal is before the Administration, to ask the broadband providers involved about their future commitments to continued broadband build-outs. I know that broadband deployment is a priority for the Administration. I ask that you determine the intentions of the broadband providers as part of your inquiries during this process and carefully evaluate the transaction taking into consideration the pro-consumer, pro-competition provisions enshrined in the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

I am grateful for your attention and hope that you will not hesitate to be in touch about how we can work together on improving access to both wireless and wire line broadband networks.

Sincerely,



Steve Israel
Member of Congress