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Salisbury supports Community Choice for Internet letter to FCC

Salisbury, North Carolina, January 29, 2015 –Mayor Paul Woodson has joined with 37 other Mayors to sign a letter to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in support of Community Choice for Internet infrastructure. The enclosed press release from Next Century Cities Executive Director Deb Socia provides additional information about the letter and its signatories.

For Immediate Release

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38 Mayors Support Community Choice for Internet in Letter to FCC

Next Century Cities, Boston, Kansas City (MO) Urge FCC Not to Restrict Cities Seeking Vital High-Speed Internet Infrastructure

Washington, D.C. (January 29, 2015) – Today, 38 mayors and elected officials joined Next Century Cities in a letter to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in support of community choice for Internet infrastructure. The FCC is currently considering whether it should allow laws to stand that restrict the ability of communities to pursue high-speed Internet. President Obama recently came out strongly against these types of restrictions.

The officials signing onto the letter are members of Next Century Cities, a city-to-city initiative founded to support communities and their elected leaders as they seek to ensure that all have access to fast, affordable, and reliable Internet.

“The FCC has a unique opportunity to recognize the principle of local choice,” said **Deb Socia, Executive Director of Next Century Cities**. “There is no one-size-fits-all approach for next-generation Internet, and city leaders are speaking out because all communities should be able to choose the pathway that works best for them.”

In support of the principle of local choice and self-determination, 38 Next Century Cities member communities, including Boston (MA), Kansas City (MO), Seattle (WA), Chattanooga (TN), Wilson (NC) and Santa Monica (CA), wrote the FCC, saying:

“We are writing to you today because you now face a critical choice that will help determine whether America’s towns and cities are able to develop the digital infrastructure that will power the next century... We write only to

urge that, as you consider these petitions, you take proper account of the importance of local choice and autonomy.”

In sending this letter, city leaders hope to make clear to the FCC the vital stakes of this issue. (The letter is attached to this release).

“The whole issue here is giving communities a choice. In our community, the only limitation our citizens have on their Internet speed is how much they want to spend and what their computers and devices are capable of handling,” said **City-Parish President Joey Durel of Lafayette, Louisiana**. “It shouldn’t be politicians that make the decision to have high-speed Internet, it should be citizens.”

“In today’s world, high-speed internet is no longer a luxury, but a necessity. It is a necessity for individuals to have reliable access to information, it is a necessity for businesses to have the opportunity to innovate and remain competitive, and it is a necessity for communities to attract and retain talent,” said **Mayor Sly James of Kansas City, Missouri**. “It is my hope that the FCC recognizes the principle of local control and self-determination when considering this important issue. Its decision will have an enormous impact on the ability of communities to develop.”

In 2014, Next Century Cities member communities Wilson (NC) and Chattanooga (TN) filed petitions with the FCC seeking relief from state laws that have inhibited their ability to expand their broadband Internet networks to other communities. The agency is expected to rule on the petitions in the coming weeks.

President Obama also recently weighed in on the issue of local choice, strongly siding with communities seeking all options to ensuring fast, affordable, and reliable Internet for their residents. The President also praised the work of Next Century Cities and its leaders in his January 14 speech in Cedar Falls (IA).

In writing to the FCC, mayors and city leaders are calling upon the agency to recognize that there are a variety of models open to communities to achieve high-speed Internet. Some cities choose to build and administer their own municipally-owned networks, others develop public-private partnerships, while still others achieve their goals through agreements with private providers. The principle of local autonomy does not favor any one of these models, but rather protects the ability of communities to maintain as many options as possible.

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Background

Next Century Cities is a city-to-city initiative founded to support communities and their elected leaders, including mayors and other officials, as they seek to ensure that all have access to fast, affordable, and reliable Internet. As innovative municipalities across the country recognize the importance of leveraging gigabit level Internet to attract new businesses and create jobs, improve health care and education, and connect residents to new opportunities, Next Century Cities will celebrate these successes, demonstrate their value, and help other cities to realize the full power of truly high-speed, affordable, and accessible broadband. For more information, visit www.nextcenturycities.org.

Signatories

Dana Kirkham

Mayor
Ammon, Idaho

Norman E. Yoder

Mayor
Auburn, Indiana

Martin J. Walsh
Mayor
Boston, Massachusetts

Cathy Noon
Mayor
Centennial, Colorado

Ken Lucas
Mayor Pro Tem
Centennial, Colorado

Keith Gardner
City Council Member
Centennial, Colorado

Mark Gotto
City Council Member
Centennial, Colorado

Vorry Moon
City Council Member
Centennial, Colorado

Stephanie Piko
City Council Member
Centennial, Colorado

Doris Truhlar
City Council Member
Centennial, Colorado

Kathy Turley
City Council Member
Centennial, Colorado

Charles "C.J." Whelan
City Council Member
Centennial, Colorado

Paul Cutler
Mayor
Centerville, Utah

Don Gerard
Mayor
Champaign, Illinois

Andy Berke
Mayor
Chattanooga, Tennessee

Nancy Berry

Mayor
College Station, Texas

Meghan Sahli-Wells

Mayor
Culver City, California

Bao Nguyen

Mayor
Garden Grove, California

Jerry Gist

Mayor
Jackson, Tennessee

Mark R. Holland

Mayor
Kansas City, Kansas

Sylvester "Sly" James, Jr.

Mayor
Kansas City, Missouri

Joey Durel

City-Parish President
Lafayette, Louisiana

Robert J Stevenson

Mayor
Layton City, Utah

Peter d'Errico

Select Board Member
Leverett, Massachusetts

Paul Soglin

Mayor
Madison, Wisconsin

Adam Friedrich

County Commissioner
Medina County, Ohio

Bob Nicholson

Mayor
Montrose, Colorado

Jill Boudreau

Mayor
Mount Vernon, Washington

Gary Fuller

Mayor
Opelika, Alabama

Karen Holman
Mayor
Palo Alto, California

Homer Nicholson
Mayor
Ponca City, Oklahoma

William Chapman
Select Board Chair
Rockport, Maine

Paul B. Woodson, Jr.
Mayor
Salisbury, North Carolina

Bill King
Mayor
Sandy, Oregon

Jeremy Pietzold
City Council President
Sandy, Oregon

Ryan Coonerty
County Supervisor
Santa Cruz County

Zach Friend
County Supervisor
Santa Cruz County

Kevin McKeown
Mayor
Santa Monica, California

Steven Leifson
Mayor
Spanish Fork, Utah

Stephanie A. Miner
Mayor
Syracuse, New York

Laurel Prussing
Mayor
Urbana, Illinois

Jack Burkman
City Council Member

Vancouver, Washington

Kevin Utz

Mayor

Westminster, Maryland

C. Bruce Rose

Mayor

Wilson, North Carolina

Kelly Pierson

Mayor

Winthrop, Minnesota

Bryan K. Housh

Village Council Member

Yellow Springs, Ohio

Deb Socia

Executive Director

Next Century Cities

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