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**To:** Denise Stepto - CEO

**Subject:** Gov. Hickenlooper urges support for expanding broadband to rural communities.



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Office of Gov. John Hickenlooper

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# **Gov. Hickenlooper urges support for expanding broadband to rural communities**

**DENVER — Monday, March 24, 2014 —** Gov. John Hickenlooper released this statement today in advance of several telecommunications bills that will be considered by the Colorado General Assembly:

“Simply put, we have a technological divide in Colorado; we cannot afford to have a technological divide in Colorado; and these bills go a long way toward fixing that.

“Too many Coloradans, especially those in the rural and remote areas of our state, too often don’t have the same access that other parts of the state do to reliable broadband internet service. If passed, the regulatory certainty and sensible incentives in these bills will help ensure we build these necessary bridges to the 21st century so that everyone in our state, regardless of where they live, has a fair chance to grow and prosper, to compete locally and in the global market place.

“We have no doubt that the entire General Assembly sees the value and need for the opportunities advancements that these bills provide for all Coloradans, and for our continued economic growth. We have complete faith that whatever outstanding issues there may be will be resolved and these bills will be passed before the end of the 2014 session.”

The governor called for telecommunications reform in his State of the State address at the beginning of the year: “Fourteen years into the 21st century is well past time to reform our telecommunication laws. This session, we ask you to pass legislation that will accomplish this; rural and other unserved parts of our state should have the same broadband internet access as urban areas.”

A diverse group of stakeholders also support the pending changes:

Bonnie Petersen, Executive Director of **CLUB 20**: “Communications services, like broadband, are critical and valuable to everyone in the state. CLUB 20 has always advocated for reasonably comparable access to broadband services at reasonably comparable prices across the state. Economic drivers like agriculture, health care, tourism, transportation, education and natural resource development all need access to broadband networks to grow and thrive in today’s competitive environment. We are pleased that steps are being taken to address this important need for Colorado and thank the Governor for working with the legislature toward crafting policies that will encourage investment and deployment of this technology throughout Colorado.”

Mark Linnebur, President of the **Colorado Association of Wheat Growers**: “I thank Governor Hickenlooper for his leadership and commitment to accomplishing telecom reform. Updating Colorado’s telecommunications laws will help connect all parts of Colorado, ensuring businesses big and small have access to the tools that will allow them to grow.”

Don Shawcroft, President of the **Colorado Farm Bureau**: “Access to broadband in rural areas is imperative for rural Colorado's success and growth. It expands business opportunities, expands access to tele-medicine and most importantly provides our children the additional educational tools they will need to succeed.”

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