

**Sixty-second Legislative Assembly of North Dakota
In Regular Session Commencing Tuesday, January 4, 2011**

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 3022
(Representatives Headland, Thoreson, S. Meyer)
(Senators Burckhard, Christmann, Dotzenrod)

A concurrent resolution urging the Federal Communications Commission to make substantive changes to the National Broadband Plan so that the plan does not limit the future economic livelihood and social well-being of rural consumers.

WHEREAS, North Dakotans living in rural areas deserve and expect the same high-quality, affordable communications services that are available to their urban neighbors; and

WHEREAS, rural businesses, farmers, and ranchers compete in the global marketplace and depend on affordable access to robust broadband services to market and sell products around the world, similar to businesses in urban areas; and

WHEREAS, children living in rural areas should have the same educational opportunities as their urban counterparts and high-speed Internet access is absolutely necessary to allow these students opportunities for advanced learning through distance education; and

WHEREAS, residents living in rural areas face unique health care challenges because of the distances that must be traveled to seek basic and advanced medical care and telemedicine, and telehealth delivered via broadband networks can improve the health of rural residents by reducing the time and travel needed for high-quality health care; and

WHEREAS, many rural areas encounter significant challenges in pursuing and sustaining economic development plans that bring quality, higher-paying jobs to their communities, and insufficient robust broadband speeds will further hamper the economic development needs of many rural communities; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Agriculture rightfully has placed significant importance on the need for broadband access in rural America to improve the quality of life and economic development; and

WHEREAS, communications providers that serve this state's small towns and rural areas have done an outstanding job of ensuring their consumers have access to affordable, reliable broadband services through the assistance of the federal universal service fund and the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Utilities Service loan and grant programs; and

WHEREAS, contrary to the success many small, rural communications providers have had in deploying broadband, the Federal Communications Commission is embarking on a National Broadband Plan that will negatively impact the ability of rural North Dakotans to realize the true benefits of access to robust broadband speeds by limiting support to four megabits per second in rural, high-cost areas of the country, while calling for 100 million urban homes to have access to broadband speeds at 100 megabits per second by 2020; and

WHEREAS, the National Broadband Plan runs counter to the federal policy of universal service which ensures access to comparable communications services at roughly similar costs regardless of the location of the consumer;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF NORTH DAKOTA, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN:

That the Sixty-second Legislative Assembly of North Dakota urges the Federal Communications Commission to make substantive changes to the National Broadband Plan so that the plan does not limit the future economic livelihood and social well-being of rural consumers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Sixty-second Legislative Assembly of North Dakota encourages the North Dakota Congressional Delegation to work with the Federal Communications Commission to ensure the understanding of the importance of a robust broadband development to rural North Dakota and how the current draft of the National Broadband Plan needs to be dramatically altered to ensure quality broadband services availability throughout this state; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of State forward copies of this resolution to the Federal Communications Commission and to each member of the North Dakota Congressional Delegation.

Speaker of the House

President of the Senate

Chief Clerk of the House

Secretary of the Senate