



Press Release

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MMTC URGES GOVERNMENT TO ADDRESS DIGITAL REDLINING; ENSURE EQUITABLE BROADBAND ACCESS FOR ALL

WASHINGTON, D.C. (January 15, 2015): The Minority Media and Telecommunications Council (MMTC) supports President Obama's goal outlined in yesterday's [action plan](#) to deploy higher-speed broadband to underserved rural communities. Addressing gaps in broadband deployment is one of several strategies to close the digital divide. Yesterday's proposal, however, did not 1) address the much larger challenge of broadband adoption that continues to promulgate second class digital citizenship among more vulnerable populations that include people of color, seniors, people with disabilities, and the poor, or 2) include a plan to eradicate the practice of digital redlining, the refusal to build and serve lower-income communities on the same terms as wealthier communities.

Access to high-speed broadband networks is not just about rolling out the latest technology; it is a critical social justice issue that opens the door to civic, social, and economic opportunities for many online users. To date, more than 30 million Americans have not adopted broadband, and a large portion of non-adopters do not understand the value proposition of high-speed broadband to their daily lives. Today's announcement failed to indicate how the nation will work aggressively to address, invest in, and ultimately solve this pressing social challenge that persists despite the availability of high-speed broadband.

As the Administration seeks to support projects that expand access to communities where broadband is not available or affordable, MMTC urges federal policymakers to safeguard all communities against digital redlining that has the potential to create 'fiber deserts' within and adjacent to neighborhoods. Government must look behind the bright lights of better, faster, cheaper broadband and provide safeguards to ensure that broadband networks are not deployed in a manner that ultimately redlines communities based on socio-economic factors and [widens the digital divide](#), as has been found in a recent survey by the *Wall Street Journal*.

Finally, MMTC applauds the [work](#) of the National Telecommunications & Information Administration (NTIA) over the past five years to stimulate social and economic growth while ensuring the most vulnerable communities are not left behind as the Nation moves forward. NTIA's Broadband Technology Opportunities Program, which has invested \$4 billion to build network infrastructure, establish public computer centers, and develop digital literacy training to expand broadband adoption, has constituted a model for effectively addressing broadband and deployment.

We hope that the Administration will consider looking to MMTC and similarly focused organizations to help identify cures to those barriers that stifle the full engagement and benefit of citizens in the burgeoning digital economy.

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About MMTC:

The Minority Media and Telecommunications Council (MMTC) is a non-partisan, national nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and preserving equal opportunity and civil rights in the mass media, telecommunications and broadband industries, and closing the digital divide. MMTC is generally recognized as the nation's leading advocate for minority advancement in communications.