



March 13, 2020

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
Committee on Energy & Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Greg Walden
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy & Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Wicker, Chairman Pallone, Ranking Member Cantwell and Ranking Member Walden:

On behalf of USTelecom – The Broadband Association, I am writing to update you on the collective effort of our members to ensure a high degree of network preparedness, security and reliability as COVID-19 compels widespread workplace and school closures and potentially atypical traffic demands on America’s broadband networks.

Broadband providers are laser focused on making sure the innovative networks they built and manage are ready to accommodate a prolonged reliance on telework, distance learning and other forms of high bandwidth remote communications.

For context, in recent years broadband providers have made sizable infrastructure investments – almost \$80 billion in 2018 – to upgrade networks for both speed and capacity to meet the ever-expanding consumer demand for data usage.

Currently more than 60 percent of network throughput is via video and content streaming. While these data flows continue to increase year-over-year, at peak hours our networks have sufficient capacity to provide customers with necessary bandwidth.

In fact, our networks are engineered with advanced technologies including internet protocol, virtualization, data centers, caching, cloud and other software-based innovations that optimize capacity, adapt to congestion and otherwise direct internet traffic to places in the network where bandwidth is available.

As of this writing, in communities where a large population of workers are being told to stay home, we have not observed time shifted traffic exceeding peak network capacity. Similarly,

providers have not reported material congestion or internet latency issues. These are the network capacity metrics we are monitoring around the clock to assess how the infrastructure is tolerating the internet's changing business, education and social uses.

USTelecom members – from small rural providers to the nation's largest communications carriers – are closely coordinating and relaying operational performance information to our partners in government, including the Department of Homeland Security, FEMA and various state safety agencies. This includes the sharing of mission critical functions, network incident response and business continuity plans.

Internet service providers are on guard against malicious cyber actors who would use this emergency to take advantage of consumers through phishing schemes and other nefarious or criminal actions. The Industry Traceback Group, founded and coordinated by USTelecom with the support of industry, is actively monitoring and tracing potentially illegal robocalls related to COVID-19. We are determined to identify the perpetrators behind these illegal scams and help federal and state law enforcement bring them to justice.

Providers also have in place specific procedures and protocols to ensure first responder communications are prioritized and can transit the networks in the event of an emergency.

USTelecom commends the FCC's "Keep Americans Connected Pledge," in keeping with, and reflective of, our members' enduring and unshakeable commitment to bring the power and potential of broadband to our nation's families, communities and enterprises everywhere.

This is an evolving and unprecedented situation for our country and global community, but every company we represent is committed to the principles of network preparedness and resiliency – in good times and bad. Broadband is the 21st century's indispensable resource, never more so than in an environment where COVID-19 is reshaping the way we interact with our families, colleagues and fellow citizens.

We intend to provide you and your staff regular updates on network performance during this crisis. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Spalter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jonathan Spalter
President and CEO
USTelecom – The Broadband Association

Cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Senate Majority Leader
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, House Minority Leader
The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Senate Minority Leader