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## Dear Executive:

In this time of critical national broadband policy formation, there is very little response from the fiber optics industry.

Perhaps we expected too much. Perhaps we were used to the industry of the 1980s and 1990s when fiber was in a dogfight with copper and satellite about the best means of long-haul communications. When that battle was won by a proactive community, and the ensuing glut became the story, it appeared as though some of the life was taken from the industry.

Even with the new announcement that Charlie Kao had won the Nobel Prize, there seems to be little spark. Fiber optics companies are worried about their own destiny. There is no room to look out for the technology at large.

Having just gone through the FCC workshops, we suffered through a barrage of charges aimed at fiber with very little response. Its too expensive, broadband wireless is coming, fiber jobs have moved overseas and will never come back. And most of us sat there and listened. What has happened to us?

Certainly there are sparks. The Fiber to The Home Council reminds us of how far America still has to go in FTTH deployments. Yet its message is focused on one subset of fiber optics and has not been represented on the FCC workshop panels. With the exception of Geoff Burke from Calix and Hunter Newby from Allied Fiber, there was very little support for the obvious benefits of fiber at the FCC workshops. The annual OFC/NFOEC is a tremendous rallying point for the industry, but its message also does not fully get to Washington.

What is missing is the strong voice necessary to wake Washington's policymakers up to the core advantages of fiber optics. This is the ultra-broadband, futureproof, 100 Mbps+ delivering technology. Nothing else comes close. Not even DOCSIS 3.0 which we have been hearing ad nauseum about and which once again provides limited additional broadband from copper until the MSOs decide themselves to go all the way home with fiber. Fiber is the core global infrastructure, connecting the continents, the enabler to provide longhaul broadband to Internet2 and any other host of fast Internet lines. It is the solution.

Fiber optics technology runs the very real risk of being branded as being too expensive if we are not careful in the minds of national policymakers and missing out on the party that it should be hosting.

Yes, it was staggering to hear the FCC's estimate that to provide fiber optics to every home in America would cost \$350 billion. But where was the immediate fiber response? Verizon will pass 18 million homes with \$20 billion, so maybe that \$350 billion number is off. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation says they can wire every hospital, library and school in America for \$10 billion. Tops. We should be screaming bloody murder at a figure like \$350 billion. But we do nothing.

In fact, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation numbers are turning into a cause celebre where every member of the fiber optics community can do something. The FCC National Broadband Team has issued a public notice inviting people to dispute the numbers the team came up with. There still are a strong cadre of national broadband policymakers who believe that fiber optics is some ultra-expensive, pie-in-the-sky technology that the public will never be able to afford. Forget the fact that America already has tens of thousands of miles of the stuff that we all use.

Fiber optics companies can provide key economic information that will help turn the tide on this thinking by providing sound data that fiber can be installed economically. To access the FCC public

notice, go to [http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/attachmatch/DA-09-2194A1.pdf](http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-09-2194A1.pdf). We urge you to read through it, respond to the questions asked, and file by October 28. It is only through this kind of action that the FCC and other national broadband policymakers will get a good idea of fiber's real cost.

No doubt our fiber optic companies are getting some funds from the broadband stimulus program. Apparently it is enough to keep them fat, dumb and happy. But are we the only ones reading the writing on the wall here? My goodness, Nortel's famed optical transport and carrier Ethernet divisions are being sold piecemeal. Still don't see a problem? To paraphrase Ben Franklin, at a time when we should be hanging together, we are most assuredly getting to the point where we will be hanging separately.

It is time to once again unite, to stand up and rally around fiber optics, the technology that can.