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WTA Applauds House Communications and Technology Subcommittee for Holding Hearing on Rural Call Completion Problems

WASHINGTON, D.C. (September 8, 2016) – WTA – Advocates for Rural Broadband applauds the House Communications and Technology Subcommittee for highlighting the problem of telephone calls not being completed in rural parts of the country in a hearing held today.

The hearing focused on bipartisan legislation, H.R. 2566, the Improving Rural Call Quality and Reliability Act, introduced by Rep. David Young (R-IA) and cosponsored by Communications and Technology members Reps. Peter Welch (D-VT), Dave Loebsack (D-IA), and Kevin Cramer (R-SD).

“We’re grateful that Subcommittee Chairman Greg Walden (R-OR), Vice-Chairman Bob Latta (R-OH), and other leaders on the Committee have highlighted the problem our member companies and their customers have been dealing with for well over five years and are looking to help resolve it,” said Derrick Owens, WTA’s Vice President of Government Affairs.

H.R. 2566 directs the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to address the ongoing problem of telephone calls not always being completed to rural areas. Specifically, the bill would require all intermediate providers of voice communications services to register with the FCC and comply with service quality standards established by the agency. For several years, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of telephone calls not being completed in rural areas mostly due to the use of least cost routers that, at times, do not terminate calls in rural areas because of the cost.

“We appreciate the work Rep. Young has done to introduce this bipartisan solution on the House side and we hope that it can move through the Committee process quickly so it can be voted on by the full House. In June the Senate Commerce Committee passed similar legislation and it would be very helpful to our members and their customers to have this type of bipartisan legislation make its way to the President’s desk to be signed into law before Congress adjourns,” said Owens. “We believe this legislation complements the work being done at the FCC on call completion, and that it provides additional assurance that all

calls will be completed. Having a phone call reach its intended recipient has been a basic standard of our communications network for decades.”

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WTA represents more than 300 small, rural telecommunications carriers providing voice, video and data services in the United States. WTA's members serve some of the most rural and hard-to-serve communities in the country and are on the forefront of bringing 21st Century telecommunications services to rural America. To learn more about WTA, visit www.w-t-a.org.