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**Contact: Derrick Owens
202-548-0202, derrick@w-t-a.org**

**WTA Praises Introduction of Legislation Expanding
Broadband Grants in Rural America**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (November 17, 2016) – WTA – Advocates for Rural Broadband praises Representatives Mark Pocan (D-WI) and Elise Stefanik (R-NY) for introducing the Broadband Connections for Rural Opportunities Program (B-CROP) Act. B-CROP would expand the Broadband Loan Program administered by USDA’s Rural Utilities Service (RUS) to include grants to entities seeking to build broadband in areas that are not being served by high-speed broadband.

“This House bill is a great complement to the legislation introduced earlier this year by Senators Gillibrand and Capito. As we saw with the Broadband Initiative Program, implemented as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, rural telecommunications providers are interested in grants as well as loans to assist them in building broadband out to previously unserved areas,” said Derrick Owens, WTA’s Vice President of Government Affairs. “We look forward to working with Reps. Stefanik and Pocan as they advance this bipartisan idea in the next Congress.”

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WTA represents around 350 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.