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WTA Urges Congress to Allocate Specific Infrastructure Funding for Rural Broadband

WASHINGTON, D.C. (March 12, 2018) – The following statement can be attributed to Derrick Owens, Senior Vice President of Government & Industry Affairs for WTA – Advocates for Rural Broadband:

“As the Senate Commerce Committee holds hearings this week to examine the President’s proposal for infrastructure investment, WTA – Advocates for Rural Broadband, urges Committee members to remember the needs of the rural communities across the country that don’t have adequate access to high-speed broadband.

“The President’s proposal is a good first step, though we think more direction should be given when it comes to rural broadband infrastructure. As currently constructed, there is no requirement that any of the \$50 billion it proposes to spend on rural infrastructure be used to expand broadband access or upgrade broadband networks. We have concerns that the proposal block grants funds to states and, as a result, other priorities will receive precedence when states determine where to spend federal resources.

“We look forward to the hearings this week, and we hope the discussion includes the proposal the Senate Democrats have put together, which would provide over \$40 billion for broadband and communications networks, including those in Tribal areas. As Congress puts its mark on the President’s plan, it should directly allocate a portion of the federal funds dedicated for rural infrastructure for broadband infrastructure purposes.”

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WTA – Advocates for Rural Broadband is a national trade association that represents more than 340 small, rural telecommunications carriers providing voice, broadband and video-related 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.