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

**WTA Supports Legislation to Help Small ISPs
with Lost Revenue Due to COVID-19**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (March 25, 2020) – WTA – Advocates for Rural Broadband supports bipartisan legislation introduced today by Representatives Peter Welch (D-VT) and Roger Marshall (R-KS) and several of their colleagues that would allow small Internet service providers to recover lost revenue from a federal fund due to the coronavirus.

Broadband providers around the country are responding to the federally declared national emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic by pledging to not discontinue service to customers who've experienced a loss of income and cannot pay their bills. Many of these broadband providers are also working to provide increased levels of service to students displaced from their schools and workers told to work from home who need broadband at their residence.

“During this pandemic, we’re truly seeing how important and necessary broadband is to businesses and their employees, to students, to municipal governments, and to every American who just wants to stay connected to their neighbors and family members,” said Derrick Owens, Senior Vice President of Government & Industry Affairs for WTA.

“The broadband providers we represent are doing the right thing by ramping up service during this time and are promising to keep the pipes lit regardless of ability to pay, but this will have an effect on cash flow. They’re businesses that need to pay their employees, perform maintenance, upgrade services, and buy new equipment,” said Owens. “Broadband is vital infrastructure just like water, sewer, and electrical services. It’s important that small ISPs are able to stay in business at this difficult time. The legislation introduced by Representatives Welch and Marshall will help ensure these companies are able to continue to provide the broadband services their customers need.”

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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.