

## **FCC Announces Broadband Acceleration Initiative**

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Shirley S. Fujimoto, Jeffrey L. Sheldon, Kevin M. Cookler

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has announced a Broadband Acceleration Initiative to expand the reach and reduce the costs of broadband deployment by reducing regulatory barriers to access, such as electric utility distribution poles, rights-of-way, and sites for wireless towers. At a Broadband Acceleration Conference hosted today at the FCC, Chairman Julius Genachowski stated that the FCC is launching this new initiative to bring together key stakeholders, such as federal, state, and local governments, broadband providers, telecommunications carriers, tower companies, equipment suppliers, and electric utility companies to identify opportunities to remove barriers to broadband build-out.

As part of the Broadband Acceleration Initiative, the FCC announced the following actions:

- At the FCC's Open Meeting scheduled for April 7, 2010, it will vote on an order that streamlines access to pole attachments and reduces the cost while protecting the vital electric power grid. Chairman Genachowski explained that this proceeding was initiated to ease access to utility poles, which are critical to wired and wireless broadband deployment.
- The FCC will also vote at that meeting on a Notice of Inquiry to collect information about federal, state and local public rights-of-way regulations and practices that may be impeding broadband investment.
- The FCC will form an internal Broadband Acceleration Task Force to develop specific goals and timelines for reducing barriers to broadband build-out by at least 20 percent.
- A working group of the FCC's Technical Advisory Council will report in March 2011 on specific steps the FCC can take to promote broadband build-out.

The actions announced by the FCC at the Broadband Acceleration Conference are part of a three-pronged strategy by the FCC to promote broadband:

- (1) unleash spectrum for wireless broadband, including voluntary incentive auctions;
- (2) transform the Universal Service Fund to incentivize private companies to build broadband networks in unserved rural areas; and
- (3) accelerate broadband by removing barriers to access and speeding up the process to lower the cost of deployment.

A copy of the FCC's Broadband Acceleration Initiative announcement and Chairman Genachowski's opening remarks at the Broadband Acceleration Conference are available at

[http://www.fcc.gov/Daily\\_Releases/Daily\\_Business/2011/db0209/DOC-304571A2.pdf](http://www.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2011/db0209/DOC-304571A2.pdf) and  
[http://www.fcc.gov/Daily\\_Releases/Daily\\_Business/2011/db0209/DOC-304571A1.pdf](http://www.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2011/db0209/DOC-304571A1.pdf).