



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Rural Development



Presented by: Robert (Bob) Ehrlich

Broadband Opportunity Council (BOC) Overview and Update

2016 ACE School and RUS Symposium

Agenda

- Background
 - Overview of the Presidential Memorandum
 - Council Member Agencies
 - Timeline
 - Request for Comment
- Key Components of the Report to the President
- Links

Background

Overview of Presidential Memorandum

- On March 23, 2015, President Obama signed a Presidential Memorandum establishing the Broadband Opportunity Council to promote broadband deployment and adoption by:
 - Addressing regulatory barriers
 - Encouraging public and private investment
 - Promoting broadband adoption and meaningful use
 - Supporting broadband deployment, competition and adoption
- Co-chaired by the Secretaries of Commerce and Agriculture.
- 25 Agencies represented on the council.
- Providing recommendations on how agencies can promote broadband deployment, adoption and competition.

Link: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/03/23/presidential-memorandum-expanding-broadband-deployment-and-adoption-addr>

Council Member Agencies

Co-Chairs

- USDA (Rural Development)
- Commerce (NTIA)



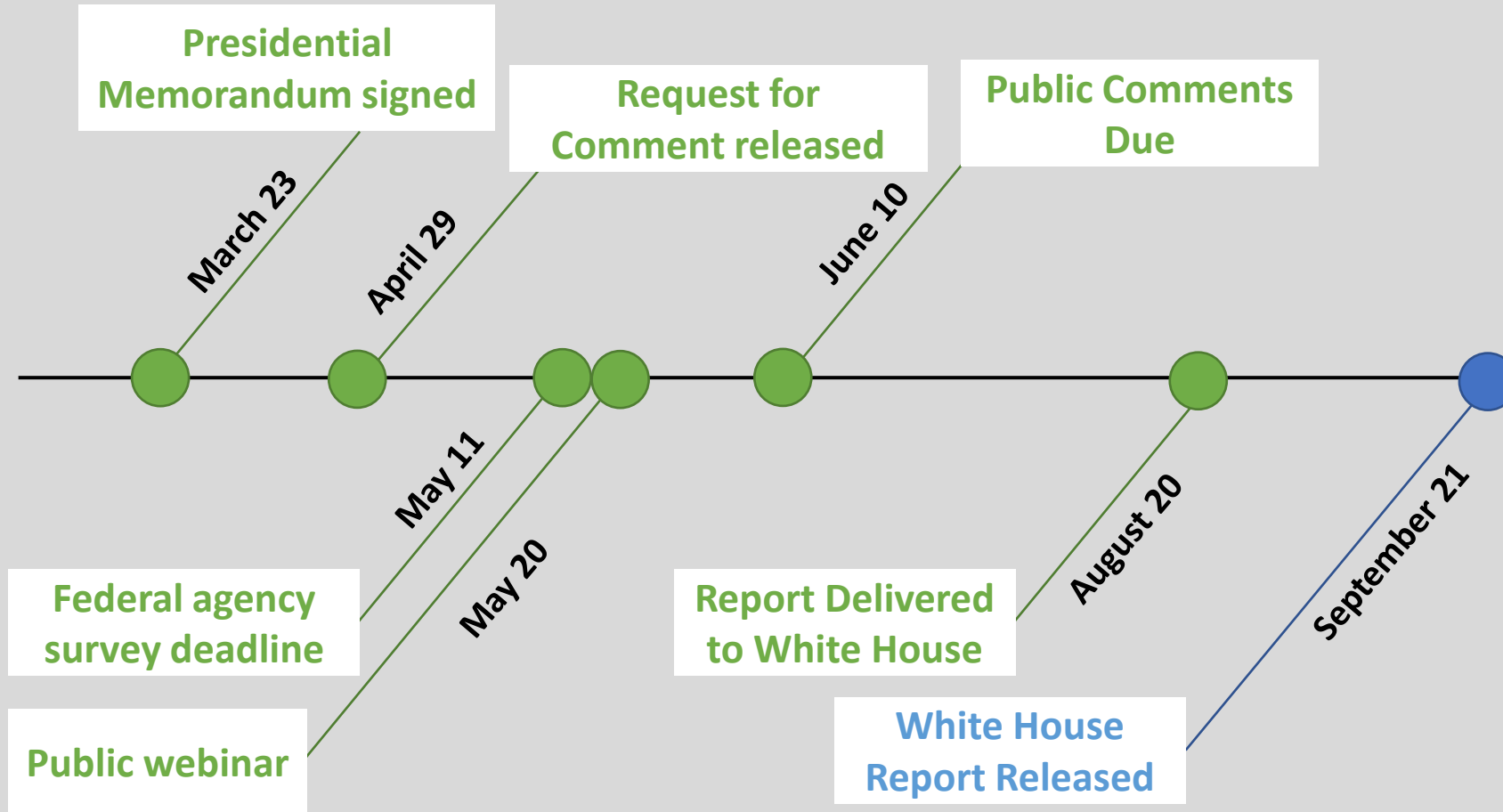
United States Department of Commerce
National Telecommunications and
Information Administration

Members



Department of Agriculture [Co-Chair]	Department of Homeland Security	Department of Veterans Affairs
Department of Commerce [Co-Chair]	Department of Housing and Urban Development	Environmental Protection Agency
Appalachian Regional Commission	Department of Health and Human Services	Federal Communications Commission
Department of Defense	Department of Justice	General Services Administration
Department of Education	Department of Labor	Institute for Museum and Library Services
Department of Energy	Department of State	National Science Foundation
Department of Interior	Department of Transportation	Small Business Administration

Timeline



Since Sep, 2015:

- The BOC working group has met every 2 weeks (Representatives of federal agencies).
- Each agency updates the Council on the current status of their initiatives.
- Agencies are expected to meet milestones each quarter and accomplish many of the BOC recommendations by the end of 2016.

Request For Comment

- ~250 Responses received
- Key issues raised include the need for:
 - Increased clarity and guidance on Federal funding options for broadband;
 - Streamlined processes and access to infrastructure Federal assets for broadband;
 - Educating communities on how to attract local investment;
 - Publishing best practices and offering technical assistance;
 - Providing access to more data and research on broadband
- Link: <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/federal-register-notice/2015/broadband-opportunity-council-comments>

Report To The President

Report to the President

- Describes 36 immediate actions, with associated milestones, that Federal Agencies have committed to undertake
- Four key themes:
 - Modernize Federal programs to expand program support for broadband investments
 - Empower communities with tools and resources to attract broadband investment and promote meaningful use
 - Promote increased broadband deployment and competition through expanded access to Federal assets
 - Improve Data Collection, Analysis and Research on Broadband

Modernize Federal programs to expand program support for broadband investments

- Agencies outlined 13 actions to clarify eligibility of funds for broadband purposes in Federal grants and loans – valued at \$10B
- Examples include:
 - HUD: Community Development Block Grant, Housing Trust Fund
 - Treasury: New Markets Tax Credit Program

Empower communities with tools and resources to attract broadband investment and promote meaningful use

- Community Connect Initiative (i.e. Connectivity Index)
- One-stop portal for information about Federal broadband programs
- Promote Dig-Once policies across multiple agencies
- Tribal connectivity initiatives

Promote increased broadband deployment and competition through expanded access to Federal assets

- Leverage highway rights of way for broadband
- Open data effort: inventory of federal assets that can support broadband
- Expand use of DOI towers on Tribal and rural lands for broadband deployment

Improve data collection, analysis and research on broadband

- Develop a “Broadband Research Agenda”
- Pilot new applications to leverage broadband networks

USDA Action Items

■ **Community Facilities Guaranteed Loan Program**

- Community Facilities (CF) will collaborate with RUS to develop and promote new policies for broadband and infrastructure funding in rural communities.

■ **Rural Business Cooperative Service Business and Industry (B&I) Loan Program Announcement**

- RBS will issue guidance to rural communities stating that broadband projects represent an eligible infrastructure expense.

USDA Action Items (Continued)

▪ **Rural Utilities Service Electric SmartGrid Announcement**

- RUS will issue guidance to legacy electric borrowers/stakeholders that broadband projects which support SmartGrid and communications facilities for energy management are eligible.

▪ **Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Telecommunication Infrastructure Program regulation update**

- RUS will remove barriers from outdated regulations that block broadband investment in specific areas with inadequate service.

Links

Links

Presidential Memorandum establishing the Broadband Opportunity Council

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/03/23/presidential-memorandum-expanding-broadband-deployment-and-adoption-addr>

White House Blog Post Announcing the Report

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2015/09/21/new-steps-deliver-high-speed-broadband-across-united-states>

Public Comments

<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/federal-register-notice/2015/broadband-opportunity-council-comments>



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