

## Cosponsor S. 3565/H.R. 6929 – the Affordable Connectivity Program Extension Act

### Key Findings

- The FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program provides a \$30 monthly benefit to help low-income households afford broadband internet service.
- Members in the House and Senate have introduced H.R. 6929/S. 3565, the Affordable Connectivity Program Extension Act, which would provide much needed funding to ACP before it expires in April.
- Electric cooperatives serve 92% of the persistent poverty counties with reliable electric service. As a result, co-ops understand the importance of addressing affordability when providing electricity or broadband in rural communities.

Rural electric cooperatives provide electric and broadband service to some of the hardest to serve and highest cost areas of the country, including to 92% of the country's persistent poverty counties. As a result, co-ops understand the importance of a low-income broadband program that truly addresses the issue of affordability. As more cooperatives build out their broadband networks, increasing the adoption rate is key to the long-term viability of the business, particularly in rural and/or low income areas where affordability will become increasingly critical to adoption.

The 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) created the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) at the FCC, which provides a \$30 monthly benefit to eligible low-income households to help with the cost of broadband service. Since the program's launch in December 2021, the FCC has reported that more than 22 million households have enrolled in the program. However, given the significant demand for the program and current enrollment rate, the FCC is now projecting that ACP will run out of funding in April 2024.

We encourage support for S. 3565/H.R. 6929, the Affordable Connectivity Program Extension Act, a bipartisan bill led by Sens. Welch and Vance, and Reps. Clarke and Fitzpatrick, that would provide an additional \$7 billion for ACP and extend the program through the end of the year. Enactment of this legislation would provide clarity and certainty around the program for participating broadband providers and enrolled households while Congress works to develop a permanent funding solution.

Should programs supporting affordability fail, not only could it jeopardize access to broadband for millions of consumers, but it could negatively impact the ability of providers to provision broadband service in high-cost or low-income areas. Congress must ensure that there is a permanent, dependable, and effective low-income broadband program that will allow providers to deliver the highest quality broadband service to their communities at an affordable price.