



## **TechMaine Broadband Position Statement**

***TechMaine supports ubiquitous, affordable and reliable telecommunications and broadband access throughout Maine.***

### **Summary**

Ubiquitous, affordable and reliable high-speed Internet connectivity throughout Maine is essential to ensure a high quality of life and to support the jobs being created in the new information economy. Access to broadband is key to solving critical challenges facing our state. Economic opportunities occur with the availability of broadband. We must expand the availability and use of broadband technology to ensure the competitiveness of Maine's businesses in today's global marketplace. Distance learning offers new educational opportunities to all of our state's students. New tele-health services will bring health care to people in rural and currently underserved areas. Maine needs to implement a policy environment for the development of a world-class broadband infrastructure.

### **Impact on TechMaine Members**

TechMaine members compete in a global economy. TechMaine member companies require the bandwidth, manufacture the hardware, code the software, build the infrastructure, and provide the value-added services that are essential for the realization of the full potential of broadband. In support of our members and economic growth in Maine, TechMaine has an interest in ensuring that current and future state policies promote the deployment of broadband. Any regulation must recognize and be relevant to the rapidly changing market conditions affecting technologies and services. Unreasonable requirements or regulations as a condition of public incentives or stimulus funding should be avoided as they will certainly introduce fear, uncertainty, and delay into efforts that should focus on creating 21st century jobs and a new broadband infrastructure.

### **TechMaine Position**

TechMaine believes in open market competition, and that the Legislature should not encourage or mandate one technology or service over another. TechMaine supports open access which promotes competition among service providers to ensure that businesses and residents receive optimal service at competitive pricing. It is a proper role for state government to lead economic development policies that enable Maine businesses to be more competitive in the global marketplace. The state of Maine should support and encourage private sector led investment and deployment of high speed broadband. Any public incentives or stimulus funding programs for broadband deployment should contain measurable goals. Public funding should go to specific efforts and projects that bring affordable and reliable high-speed Internet connectivity to Maine businesses and residents.



## Broadband Policy Environment

TechMaine recommends that a clear policy environment be defined and adopted. This policy environment should include the following elements:

- Adopt a regulatory environment that encourages private sector investment in the deployment of broadband technologies;
- Investigate and remove barriers that deter service providers from offering high speed information services to homes and businesses;
- Monitor the build-out of broadband to ensure access and market competition;
- Utilize private sector solutions when available. Government investment should be an option to support the private sector or when these solutions are not practical; and
- Encourage Research and Development activities at the University of Maine campuses to investigate new broadband technologies which can be commercialized by the private sector.

## Broadband Policy Principles

1. State and municipal governments broadband deployment goals and policies should:
  - a. simplify rights-of-way requirements
  - b. promote private investment in expanded broadband infrastructure
  - c. expand broadband statewide, including those regions recognized as underserved
  - d. encourage private sector competition
2. State and municipal governments should avoid new taxes or fees on broadband services. If public incentives are necessary for the build-out of broadband, they should be obtained from non-discriminatory general revenue sources. Any use of public incentives should require explicit accountability metrics and measurable goals.
3. State and municipal governments should establish a competitive and transparent process to reach broadband goals and remove regulatory policies that create barriers to entry.
  - a. With public input, they should first assess unmet demand, underserved areas, and future requirements;
  - b. State and municipal efforts should not get preferred access to rights-of-way, subsidies, or other favored treatment;
  - c. Private sector firms should be encouraged to bid on broadband network deployment, service provision and network operational requirements; and
  - d. To promote rapid build-out of broadband infrastructure through private investment; public facilities (schools, administrative offices, libraries, etc) should be encouraged to sign long-term contracts with service providers.