

**RESOLUTION ON THE RIGHT OF COMMUNITIES TO PROVIDE
BROADBAND INTERNET SERVICES**

WHEREAS, the American Library Association has long standing policies in support of universal and affordable access to telecommunications services in order for libraries to provide information and services to their users and communities; and

WHEREAS, the functions of telecommunications networks and services, especially to advanced broadband services, including wireless broadband, are critical for libraries to maintain and further develop information and access services in all types of libraries and the communities and institutions they serve; and

WHEREAS, nearly half of the nation's libraries already offer or are planning to offer in the near future wireless broadband services; and

WHEREAS, providing wireless connectivity has become an important way for all types of libraries to cope with the high public demand for affordable access to their information services when they have been unable to add terminals because of resource limitations; and

WHEREAS, public access to critical information services in health, education, business and e-government increasingly requires wireless and other broadband connectivity; and

WHEREAS, students and lifelong learners increasingly require access to broadband wireless services for distance learning and to develop information and technological literacy for success in school and in the 21st Century workforce; and

WHEREAS, the United States has fallen to 16th among industrialized nations in deploying broadband services; and

WHEREAS, community broadband is not incompatible with private sector competition; and

WHEREAS, empowering local and tribal governments will also benefit rural and urban areas and will speed deployment throughout the country, lessening the gap between the United States and other nations; and

WHEREAS, because of the benefits of universal and affordable broadband access will bring to Americans, Congress should ensure that municipal entities and tribal governments may continue to offer a wide variety of broadband services to their respective communities; and

WHEREAS, the decisions about whether to provide or franchise broadband and other services through public, private, or public-private entities should continue to be made by local governments directly accountable to their communities and institutions, using open and competitively-neutral processes, and should not be foreclosed by state or federal law; and

WHEREAS, Senators Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and John McCain (R-AZ) recently introduced S. 1294, “The Community Broadband Act of 2005” that would ensure that local governments are not prohibited from providing broadband networks to their communities; and

WHEREAS, Representative Pete Session (R-TX) recently introduced H.R. 2726, “Preserving Innovation in Telecom Act of 2005,” that prohibits local and state governments and related public entities from providing broadband services thus thwarting the historic right of municipal governments to make such determinations at the local level; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, the American Library Association support legislation, including S.1294, that protects the rights of municipal governments to provide broadband wireless networks to their communities; and be it further

RESOLVED that, the American Library Association oppose H.R. 2726 because it denies municipal governments the right to locally determine broadband deployment thus making broadband wireless development the exclusive purview of corporate entities; be it further

RESOLVED that, the American Library Association encourage its state chapters, affiliates and others in the library community to monitor and participate in debates on state legislation or policy proposals in order to ensure that local governments are not prohibited from providing broadband wireless networks to their residents, businesses and educational institutions; and be it further

RESOLVED that, the American Library Association continue to work with allies and coalitions, such as the National League of Cities and the National Association of Counties to preserve local governments’ rights to determine how broadband wireless deployment is to be instituted within their communities and institutions.

Adopted by ALA Council at the American Library Association Annual Conference June 29, 2005.

Prior policies:

ALA Policy Manual 1.3 A – Priority areas and Goals: Access to Information

Resolution on Principles for the Networked World, adopted Midwinter 2002

Resolution on Cable Television Policy, adopted by Council January 26, 1972 Midwinter