



**Opening Statement of Chairman Chris Collins
Subcommittee on Healthcare and Technology
House Committee on Small Business
Field Hearing: “Expanding Broadband Access and Capabilities to Small Businesses in
Rural New York”
March 20, 2014**

Good morning. I want to thank everyone for joining us today. I want to especially thank our witnesses for taking time out of their busy schedules to provide testimony on expanding broadband access to small businesses in rural areas of Western New York.

Access to broadband service has the potential to transform the way small businesses and organizations fundamentally operate. Small firms can sell their products to buyers around the world, family farmers can utilize precision mapping equipment to increase their productivity, and entrepreneurs can launch a website or application from their living room. As a small business owner, I fully understand the benefits and necessity of having access to affordable broadband to run a successful business. Most importantly, broadband provides the gateway and opportunity for economic growth and job creation, especially in rural areas.

Last month, the House Committee on Small Business held a hearing regarding the innovation and growth around wireless technology. Thousands of entrepreneurs are developing dynamic products and services that utilize broadband to improve the way we live. According to a McKinsey study, over one trillion devices could be connected through wireless technology by 2025, resulting in a potential economic impact of \$36 trillion dollars. This means thousands of new jobs created by small innovative firms in a variety of industries, as well as new tools for small businesses to improve their operations.

While it is easy to understand the limitless benefits of broadband Internet, those capabilities would not be available if not for the contributions of providers like those represented here today. To keep up with the growing demand, private sector enterprises have invested billions of dollars to upgrade their networks to provide faster and more reliable services. It is because of these investments that we can enjoy broadband at the workplace or on a wireless device.

Currently, there are a variety of federal initiatives aimed at providing broadband to everyone in the United States. When considering these policies, we must first ensure that the regulatory changes do not diminish the incentive for private sector investment in broadband infrastructure. This is especially important for small Internet providers who do not have the resources and time to comply with onerous regulations.

Without private sector investment in broadband infrastructure, many small businesses in rural areas, like those here in Western New York, will be disconnected from one of the most powerful tools of our generation. This will hamper the success of these small businesses and put them at a significant disadvantage in our increasingly connected economy.

We have a distinguished panel of witnesses here today. I look forward to hearing their thoughts on the importance of broadband and how best to provide broadband to small businesses across New York and the United States.