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## **White House, Members of Congress Receive Briefings on Puerto Rico Broadband Strategic Plan**

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### ***Momentum building to boost broadband access, adoption, and use in Puerto Rico***

Read the Plan at [www.prbroadband.org](http://www.prbroadband.org)

**WASHINGTON, DC** – A comprehensive new plan to close the broadband digital divide in Puerto Rico today got top level attention from White House, congressional and industry leaders who all have a critical role to play in transforming the Island’s technology landscape over the next decade.

Puerto Rico Resident Commissioner Pedro Pierluisi, the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration, the Puerto Rico Broadband Taskforce and Connect Puerto Rico today hosted a series of briefings at the White House and on Capitol Hill on the [Puerto Rico Broadband Strategic plan](#) to build awareness of the acute digital gap in Puerto Rico, and discuss federal strategies to support efforts on the Island to bridge the gap.

Puerto Rico’s Broadband Strategic Plan is a non-partisan, public-private effort to achieve 21st century technology infrastructure and broadband adoption in Puerto Rico while strengthening the economy, increasing access to healthcare, and boosting technology in the classroom. The plan sets 25 strategic goals to boost access, adoption, and use of broadband technology in Puerto Rico, and proposing 40 specific policy strategies aimed at achieving those goals.

“It is critical that we have the correct policies in place, on both the federal and local level, to enable households and businesses in Puerto Rico to access and adopt high-speed Internet and modern telecommunications services at affordable

rates,” said Rep. Pierluisi. “Currently, broadband access and adoption on the Island is substantially lower than access and adoption in the U.S. mainland. In order to close this gap, we need to first understand the nature and scope of the problem and then formulate a comprehensive strategy to address it. That is precisely what the Puerto Rico Broadband Taskforce, working closely with Connect Puerto Rico, has done. Now, it is the responsibility of policymakers, in both San Juan and Washington, to implement the Taskforce’s recommendations. Since 2009, I have been urging the Federal Communications Commission to ensure that it crafts policies that recognize the digital divide between Puerto Rico and the rest of the United States and that mitigate, and ultimately eliminate, this divide. The Taskforce’s strategic plan will greatly assist me and my congressional allies in these ongoing advocacy efforts.”

“Puerto Rico needs to accelerate the closing of the digital divide to foster economic growth and global competitiveness,” said Juan Eugenio Rodriguez, Puerto Rico’s Chief Information Officer. “To support that goal, the Puerto Rico Broadband Strategic Plan provides the roadmap to achieve a twenty-first century technology infrastructure and a robust level of broadband adoption island-wide.”

According to the strategic plan, broadband access remains a critical issue for the island. Across Puerto Rico, an estimated 86% of households have basic, fixed broadband available to them (basic defined as 768 Kbps advertised download speed). An estimated 177,000 households have no form of broadband access other than mobile or satellite. By contrast, across the U.S. mainland, most states have broadband available to more than 95% of households.

At 31 percent, broadband adoption across Puerto Rico is less than half of the estimated broadband adoption rate across the U.S. Through efforts like those championed by the Puerto Rico Broadband Task Force and Connect Puerto Rico, progress is being made. Puerto Rico made a significant gain, and is now second in the region, going from a 43rd to 36th ranking on the World Economic Forum’s Global Information Technology Report 2012 Network Readiness Index (NRI).

Yet key findings of the broadband plan indicate that more work is needed to grow the broadband adoption rate and increase home computer use in Puerto Rico, which suffers from the most acute adoption gap in the United States. A central policy strategy of the plan underscores the need for the federal government to support and complement the efforts of the Puerto Rico Broadband Task Force to accelerate the closing of the digital divide on the island. To that end, federal programs aimed to bridge the infrastructure or adoption broadband gap should specifically target unserved and vulnerable communities across Puerto Rico, according to the plan.

Connect Puerto Rico has supported the Puerto Rico Broadband Taskforce in the preparation of the Strategic Plan by providing research and analysis. The Puerto

Rico Broadband Task Force was formed in 2011, bringing together an unprecedented group of non-partisan, public-private members, including over 90 institutions.

“Under the leadership of Juan Eugenio Rodriguez, the CIO of the Government of Puerto Rico, this unprecedented number of private and public leaders have come together to design pragmatic solutions to close the digital gap across the island. They recognize that at stake is the economic sustainability of Puerto Rico,” says Raquel Noriega, Director of Public Policy at Connected Nation.

Connect Puerto Rico is a subsidiary of Connected Nation, Inc., a non-profit corporation working with the Office of the Chief Information Officer of Puerto Rico to conduct comprehensive research and analysis of the broadband landscape in Puerto Rico as part of the State Broadband Initiative (SBI) federal grant program managed by the Department of Commerce under the National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

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**About Connected Nation:** Connected Nation is a leading technology organization committed to bringing affordable high-speed Internet and broadband-enabled resources to all Americans. Connected Nation effectively raises the awareness of the value of broadband and related technologies by developing coalitions of influencers and enablers for improving technology access, adoption, and use. Connected Nation works with consumers, community leaders, states, technology providers and foundations, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, to develop and implement technology expansion programs with core competencies centered on a mission to improve digital inclusion for people and places previously underserved or overlooked.

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