

*The following letter was signed by 106 CEOs in opposition to H.R. 1542, the Tauzin-Dingell bill:*  
November 14, 2001

The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

We strongly oppose H.R. 1542, the Tauzin-Dingell bill and urge that it not be brought to a vote by the full House of Representatives. It is wholly unnecessary and has already caused harm to our companies and to our customers. If enacted into law, its consequences would be devastating for our New Economy companies and consumers.

We fully support the goal of rapid and widespread availability of advanced service capabilities. Our companies are the competitive innovators that are driving broadband deployment. The best way to accomplish this goal for all Americans is to promote a competitive marketplace, a policy approach adopted in the historic Telecommunications Act of 1996. The best way to undermine the power of competition would be to pass H.R. 1542.

This legislation is simply not necessary. The Bell Companies still control over 95% of the nation's residential telephone lines in the areas they serve, and there are no restrictions on the Bell Companies' ability to provide local high-speed data services today. Five years after Congress directed the Bell Companies to open their networks to competitors, only seven states have been found to comply with the 14-point checklist. Passing H.R. 1542 would reward the Bell Companies for breaking their promises and would allow them to extinguish emerging competition. **H.R. 1542 could create the worst possible scenario -- four megacompanies each possessing an unregulated monopoly over local telephone services and Internet access.**

Furthermore, the legislation is causing great harm to economic growth and consumers. Our companies have spent tens of billions of dollars to build competitive networks and to bring innovative services to the marketplace. Collectively, we are the engines of the New Economy. H.R. 1542 jeopardizes our ability to continue to raise the funds to develop, build and operate these high-speed networks. The regulatory uncertainty created by H.R. 1542 has already weakened investors' confidence in our industry. We urge that any further consideration of this legislation cease and, instead, that Congress insist that the pro-competition provisions of the 1996 Act be enforced.

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