



# AMCHAM PHILIPPINES

The American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, Inc.

February 17, 2015

**Hon. Joel Roy Duavit**

Chairman

Committee on Information and Communications Technology

House of Representatives, Quezon City

**Dear Chairman Duavit:**

We write in reference to House Bill 1550 – Providing free public wireless internet accessibility in national government offices, municipal halls and provincial capitols, state universities and colleges, public parks and plazas, public hospitals and public transportation terminals by installing wireless internet connections in their buildings filed by Rep. Terry Ridon.

House Bill 1550 is consistent with the recommendation of the Joint Foreign Chambers contained in the Arangkada, a vibrant policy reform advocacy tool to support the public and private sectors of the Philippines to implement a broad range of policy recommendations to stimulate transformational and inclusive growth (see attached chapter on Information and Communications Technology). Our recommendation is to provide free Wi-Fi access in crowded urban areas.

Wireless Internet service is increasingly commercially available in most Philippine cities at various “hot spots.” A program (or a law) to make free Wi-Fi available at national high schools and in densely populated urban areas can be considered as a valuable public sector contribution to encourage greater use by Filipinos of new mobile technologies.

Higher internet penetration will bring a wealth of benefits to Filipinos and efficiencies for the economy, reducing business costs and helping the economy to become more competitive and meet its Millennium Development Goals. With mobile phone penetration in the country over 100% new Smartphone technology is increasingly available to link citizenry to the Internet. This hybridization of mobile phones with computers is already happening in developed countries, where consumers are rapidly changing to acquiring information in digital format. Financial transactions are similarly facilitated over the Internet. Investing in such infrastructure is one of the most important actions in the near-term to increase Philippine competitiveness and move towards a knowledge-based service economy.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for considering our views.

Sincerely,

**Ebb C. Hinchliffe**

Executive Director

**John D. Forbes**

Chairman, Legislative Committee

cc: Rep. Terry L. Ridon, Party-list KABATAAN