

May 30, 2021

**JOINT FOREIGN CHAMBERS URGE  
IMMEDIATE PASSAGE OF OPEN ACCESS BILL**



The Joint Foreign Chambers called for the immediate passage of House Bill 8910 or the Open Access in Data Transmission Act, which aims to bridge the critical gap in broadband infrastructure by bringing in more players in the data transmission and broadband sector.

HB 8910 is pending for plenary deliberations in the House of Representatives.



Once passed into law, the Open Access Act will provide a competitive policy and regulatory framework that lowers the barriers and cost to enter the data transmission market. This will significantly improve the data transmission services (faster internet speed and lower internet cost) throughout the country.



HB 8910 seeks to (1) make it easier for Internet Service Providers to enter the broadband sector, compete and innovate; (2) allow faster and less expensive installation of broadband facilities; and (3) make it cheaper and convenient for Filipino consumers to access Internet.

The JFC, in a letter sent to House Speaker Lord Allan Velasco, cited the widespread support for the bill from the public and private sectors especially during this time of pandemic.



The JFC believes that the enactment of this bill will substantially alleviate the challenges and difficulties brought by the COVID-19 pandemic to businesses of every size, schools, hospitals, and government who increasingly depend on digital connections in their daily work and life.



However, the group requested the House to reconsider the amendment introduced to HB 8910 during the period of amendments to retain the franchise requirement for international cable landing stations. The JFC considers such amendment as a barrier to entry of more players in the broadband sector. Sadly, this will delay lowering the cost of broadband and providing a fuller range of digital access for consumers and citizens throughout the country.



Meanwhile, as the legislation advances in Congress, the JFC also commended the Department of Information and Communications Technology for its plan to request for the certification of the Open Access bill as urgent for immediate enactment.



Approved by the following:

American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines  
Australian-New Zealand Commerce of the Philippines  
Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines  
European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines  
Japanese Chamber of Commerce & Industry of the Philippines  
Korean Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines  
Philippine Association of Multinational Companies Regional Headquarters, Inc.