



November 14, 2019

The Honorable Frank Lucas
Ranking Member
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
United State House of Representatives
Space, and Technology
2405 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Lucas:

As president of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), I write to express our support for H.R. 4979, the Rural STEM Education Act. This bill will help address our nation's need for a diverse STEM workforce that is inclusive of Americans living in rural areas.

APLU is a research, policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities. Annually, APLU's 197 U.S. member campuses enroll 4.1 million undergraduates and 1.2 million graduate students, award 1.1 million degrees, employ 1.1 million faculty and staff, and conduct \$42.4 billion in university-based research.

APLU members are working with rural communities across North America to improve educational options, economic vitality, and quality of life. Land-grant universities, in particular, deliver trusted, science-based information and educational programs for individuals, families, and communities through their Cooperative Extension efforts.

This bill works to improve access to research-based STEM education opportunities in rural schools, provide teachers with the support and tools they need to teach more effectively, and address the lack of broadband access in rural communities. All of these are necessary to ensure that more students have access to a high-quality STEM education.

There is no question that rural residents and businesses need access to high-speed internet service. APLU has been working closely with our members to improve digital inclusion for rural areas. APLU appreciates the provisions in H.R. 4979 that would expand online tools for educators and establish research opportunities to address challenges and opportunities for improving broadband access across our country.

I commend you for the introduction of this important legislation and look forward to continuing to work with you throughout the legislative process.

Sincerely,

Peter McPherson
President