



*A 501c3 organization founded in 2001*

# Legislative Update

Your Municipal Communications Resource

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## Being an Affiliate of the League of Municipalities

by Dave Garb, Legislative Committee Chair

Since March 2000, JAG (Jersey Access Group) members have raised awareness of communication issues that have an impact on the interests of local government. JAG has created initiatives that ensure the voices of local officials and citizens continue to be communicated effectively.

### JAG is an NJLM Affiliate

In 2013, JAG became an affiliate organization of the New Jersey League of Municipalities (NJLM). This allowed us to provide support to New Jersey municipalities in all areas of communications. We distribute information to more than 560 mayors and 13,000 elected and appointed officials who are League members. Each year at the League's annual conference JAG presents sessions on communications issues that impact every municipality. These panels have spanned many communication issues and contain vital and informative facts that help New Jersey municipalities face communications challenges.

### Meet the JAG Team at the NJLM Conference.

This year, JAG is preparing two new sessions that address potential funding for broadband and improving citizen engagement:

- **Following the Money: Accessing Broadband Funding**(Wednesday, November 16, 10:45AM-12:00PM in Room 413 of the Atlantic City Convention Center) JAG and the NJ League of Municipalities present a joint session that explains how to access broadband funds from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Last year the Federal Government approved \$65B to improve broadband deployment and adoption. This funding will flow to states for distribution. During this session, our expert panel discusses how municipalities can apply for grants and use funds at the local level. The panel is hosted by Mayor Brian Wahler, Piscataway Township with a keynote delivered by Lieutenant Governor Shelia Oliver. Other panelists include Valarry Bullard, Broadband Advisor to Governor Murphy; Joseph Rivera, Manager of Broadband Access - NJ BPU; Ken Fellman, Esq. Of Counsel, Helmer, Conley, & Kasselmann, P.C.; Robert Boyle, CEO Planet Networks; and Bob Duthaler, JAG President.
- **Beyond Cable: New Ways to Communicate with Your Citizens**(Thursday, November 17, 10:45AM - 12:00PM in Room 413 of the Atlantic City Convention Center). This session discusses the different media and strategies that municipalities can use to communicate with their citizens. Our panel of experts will delve into social media, over-the-top (OTT) options and platforms beyond Facebook and YouTube. Our panelists include JAG's Executive Board members who utilize various media and platforms every day to amplify and share municipal information every day.

### Find Out More About JAG

Stop by our The Jersey Access Group booth, #230, on the trade show floor. Talk to us about how our non-profit organization can help you develop the best strategy for communicating directly to your audience.

On Friday, October 14th, JAG was among nearly 250 industry and public interest groups who wrote a letter to top Senate leaders calling for a vote on the nomination of Gigi Sohn to the FCC before Congress adjourns at the end of the year. The FCC needs a full commission as it begins to deliberate on vital decisions that will impact the American people and the economy.

Following the infrastructure legislation that Congress passed last year, the federal government will soon invest an unprecedented amount of funding in expanding internet access. The lack of action on the Sohn nomination, and not having a 5th FCC Commissioner in place, has constrained the efforts to restore open internet protections and close the digital divide.

During the last administration, the agency deregulated net neutrality protections and wiped-out decades-old rules that maintained media diversity throughout our country. This new legislation directs the FCC to develop rules in order to address the discrimination in internet access on the basis of income level or race.

Here is an excerpt from the letter:

*“Over Ms. Sohn’s 30 years of experience in telecommunications, broadband and technology policy, she has shown a strong commitment to the First Amendment, and proven to be a leader in promoting innovation, US jobs and a strong economy. She has regularly worked with organizations representing diverse media interests and across the aisle to ensure all voices and views are heard both as a consumer advocate and as a government official. Her consistent and long held support of diversity in viewpoints in media will serve all voices well and is why she is supported by both conservatives and progressives. “*

It was sent to Senators Charles Schumer, Mitch McConnell, Maria Cantwell and Roger Wicker.

For a full version of this important letter please go [here](#).

### JAG - Connecting Your Content to Your Audience

**JAG (Jersey Access Group) is an organization that advocates, promotes, and preserves the right to media production, distribution, civic engagement, and education in support of diverse community voices, through Public, Educational and Government access facilities and other forms of media.**

**Learn more about how JAG can assist you.**

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## JAG Affiliations



# Organizational Members



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