

April 5, 2017

The Honorable Ron Johnson

The Honorable Claire McCaskill

Chairman

Ranking Member

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

United States Senate

Dear Chairman Johnson and Ranking Member McCaskill,

We, the undersigned businesses, industry groups, civil society organizations, and transparency advocates, write to express our strong support for the bipartisan Open, Permanent, Electronic, and Necessary (OPEN) Government Data Act (S. 760). This bill, which unanimously passed the Senate in 2016, would establish a comprehensive policy across the federal government to ensure that government data is accessible to the public by default.

In recent years, open data—data that is made freely available to use without restrictions—has proven to be an enormously effective platform for innovation in both the public and private sectors, supporting significant economic value, increasing transparency, efficiency, and accountability in government operations, and powering new tools and services that address some of the country's most pressing economic and social challenges.

The OPEN Government Data Act would require federal agencies to publish government data in machine-readable and open formats and use open licenses. In addition, it would direct agencies to support innovative uses of government data, adopt consistent data practices across government, and develop best practices for open data.

We support the OPEN Government Data Act for several reasons. First and foremost, this legislation would institutionalize the federal government's commitment to open data and allow the United States to remain a world leader on open data. Second, adopting a policy of open by default for government data would ensure that the value of this public resource would continue to grow as the government unlocks and creates new data sets. Third, a firm commitment to providing open data as a public resource would encourage businesses, non-profits, and others to invest in innovative tools that make use of government data. And, according to the Congressional Budget Office's review of the 2016 unanimously passed Senate bill, taking these steps would not have a significant impact on agency spending.

Given the many benefits of this legislation, as well as the broad industry and public support for open data, we respectfully ask this Congress to take quick and decisive action on this bill.

Sincerely,

Amazon Web Services	Data Coalition
American Association of Law Libraries	data.world, Inc.
American Statistical Association	Defending Rights & Dissent
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee	Demand Progress
APB Associates	Development Gateway
ARiA	Development Seed
Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM)	digi.me
Association of College and Research Libraries	Earth Science Information Partners (ESIP)
Association of Public Data Users	Elder Research, Inc.
Association of Research Libraries	Electronic Frontier Foundation
Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL)	Engine
Azavea	Enigma
Bayes Impact	Esri
Building Energy Helper, LLC	Experian
C_TECH (U.S. Chamber Technology Engagement Center)	FiscalNote
CA Technologies	Free Government Information
Center for Data Innovation	Frost Data Capital
Center for Democracy & Technology	FUJITSU
Center for Government Excellence at Johns Hopkins University	GitHub
Center for Open Data Enterprise	GovTrack.us
Civic Ninjas	IBM
Code for America	Information Unlimited Inc
CompTIA	Internet Association
Consortium of Social Science Associations	iSolon.org
Consumer Technology Association	Jarvus Innovations
Creative Commons	MACS 2020 (Minnesotans for the American Community Survey and 2020 Census)
	Mapbox
	Massive Connections, LLC

Nafundi

National Priorities Project

Neptune and Company, Incorporated

New America's Open Technology Institute

Niskanen Center

NY Tech Alliance

Open Austin

OpenDataSoft

Oracle

Personal

Procter & Gamble

Qlik

Quorum

R Street Institute

Rackspace

Socrata

Software & Information Industry Association

Southeast Michigan Census Council

SPARC

Splunk Inc.

Sunlight Foundation

Tableau Software, Inc.

TechFreedom

The GovLab

The OpenGov Foundation

TransitScreen

Trea Technology Inc.

Yelp

Zillow Group

April 5, 2017

The Honorable Jason Chaffetz

Chairman

The Honorable Elijah Cummings

Ranking Member

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

United States House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Chaffetz and Ranking Member Cummings,

We, the undersigned businesses, industry groups, civil society organizations, and transparency advocates, write to express our strong support for the bipartisan Open, Permanent, Electronic, and Necessary (OPEN) Government Data Act (H.R. 1770). This bill, which unanimously passed the Senate in 2016, would establish a comprehensive policy across the federal government to ensure that government data is accessible to the public by default.

In recent years, open data—data that is made freely available to use without restrictions—has proven to be an enormously effective platform for innovation in both the public and private sectors, supporting significant economic value, increasing transparency, efficiency, and accountability in government operations, and powering new tools and services that address some of the country's most pressing economic and social challenges.

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