

May 6, 2016

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. 5051). This bill 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.

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

Sincerely,

Amazon Web Services	Institute for Healthy Air, Water, and Soil
American Library Association	Internet Infrastructure Coalition
American Statistical Association	iSolon.org
ARiA	Massive Connections, LLC
Association of Public Data Users	New America's Open Technology Institute
Association of Research Libraries	Niskanen Center
Bill of Rights Defense Committee/Defending Dissent Foundation	NuCivic/GovDelivery
CA Technologies	Object Management Group, Inc.
Center for Data Innovation	OpenDataSoft
Center for Open Data Enterprise	OpenTheGovernment.org
Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness	Population Association of America/Association of Population Centers
CompTIA	Project On Government Oversight (POGO)
Consumer Technology Association	R Street Institute
Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics	Rackspace
Data Coalition	Semantic Arts, Inc.
Demand Progress	Socrata
Elder Research, Inc.	SPARC
Electronic Frontier Foundation	Splunk Inc.
EMC Corporation	Sunlight Foundation
Engine	Taxpayers for Common Sense
Esri	The Foundation for Earth Science
Government Accountability Project	TransitScreen
GovTrack.us	U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Center for Advanced Technology and Innovation
Information Unlimited Inc. (IUI)	U.S. Open Data

May 6, 2016

The Honorable Ron Johnson

Chairman

The Honorable Thomas Carper

Ranking Member

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

United States Senate

Dear Chairman Johnson and Ranking Member Carper,

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. 2852). This bill 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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