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Senators Maria Cantwell and Shelley Moore Capito Receive John D. Dingell Award

WASHINGTON (March 13, 2023) – U.S. Representative Debbie Dingell (D-MI) today presented the John D. Dingell Award to Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and to Senator Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) in recognition of their efforts to support and advocate for deploying more broadband and providing high-speed internet in underserved and unserved communities across the United States.

Among other broadband advocacy efforts, Sen. Cantwell, chair of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, was a key negotiator on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which provided a historic \$65 billion investment to expand affordable and reliable high-speed internet access in communities across the nation. In February, Sen. Capito, ranking member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, reintroduced the Rural Broadband Protection Act, which would require a more thorough vetting and verification process for internet service providers seeking to participate in the Federal Communications Commission’s high-cost programs to ensure customers can receive quality high-speed internet service.

Last August, the senators together introduced the Grant to Rapidly Invest and Deploy Broadband, or the GRID Broadband Act. As proposed, this bill would provide a robust new federal cost-share to spur investment in a nationwide middle mile-backbone along the nation’s existing energy grid to help provide affordable high-speed internet options to the 120 million American households that lack connectivity.

“Reliable internet service, much like electricity, is necessary in today’s society. The efforts and leadership of Senator Cantwell and Senator Capito are helping to bridge the digital divide while creating jobs and promoting long-term economic growth,” said Edison Electric Institute (EEI) President Tom Kuhn. “We are proud to honor them for their leadership and bipartisan efforts.”

“Senators Cantwell and Capito have shown that Washington can find bipartisan solutions to modernizing our nation’s electrical infrastructure,” said International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) International President Kenneth W. Cooper. “Things like high-speed broadband, a reliable energy grid, and good energy jobs aren’t partisan issues, but basic common sense, and I thank Senators Cantwell and Capito for their leadership and commitment to crossing the aisle to do what’s best for the nation.”



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In 2008, EEI and the IBEW came together to create the National Labor and Management Public Affairs Committee (National LAMPAC). National LAMPAC strives to foster collaboration and partnership among electric company executives and IBEW leaders to address the nation's energy challenges and to achieve the common goals of running a well-managed, efficient business with a safe and highly skilled workforce.

Named for the longest-serving member of Congress, the John D. Dingell Award is presented to leaders who exemplify and promote labor-management cooperation and whose efforts have helped to advance the common objectives of the electric power industry and IBEW members. Mr. Dingell served as Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee for many years and amassed an impressive record of bipartisan accomplishments on a wide range of issues, many of which focused on labor-management collaboration.

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EEI is the association that represents all U.S. investor-owned electric companies. Our members provide electricity for about 235 million Americans, and operate in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. As a whole, the electric power industry supports more than 7 million jobs in communities across the United States. In addition to our U.S. members, EEI has more than 65 international electric companies, with operations in more than 90 countries, as International Members, and hundreds of industry suppliers and related organizations as Associate Members.

The IBEW represents approximately 775,000 active members and retirees who work in a wide variety of fields, including utilities, construction, telecommunications, broadcasting, manufacturing, railroads and government. The IBEW has members in both the United States and Canada and stands out among the American unions in the AFL-CIO because it is among the largest and has members in so many skilled occupations.