

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 23, 2023

The Honorable Alan Davidson
Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel
Chairwoman
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street, NE
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Assistant Secretary Davidson and Chairwoman Rosenworcel,

We write with great appreciation of your efforts to implement the historic provisions of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“IIJA”) to make high-speed internet accessible and affordable for all Americans. Your agencies have been working tirelessly to implement the law’s Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (“BEAD”) Program so that the nation’s stubborn and unacceptable digital divide can be narrowed as soon as possible.¹ We were pleased to see the National Telecommunications and Information Administration’s (“NTIA”) January 13 blog post that appropriately recognizes, “Every day we delay is another day that communities are not connected.”² For this reason, we do not support an extension of the January 13 target date to submit service area mapping challenges because such an extension would result in the delay of NTIA’s June 30 target date for the allocation of BEAD Program funds.

While accurate maps are undeniably important, the benefit of any marginal improvement to the maps from a delay is outweighed by the harm to unserved and underserved communities.³ The seven months between November’s pre-production draft of the Federal Communications

¹ See, e.g., South Carolina Broadband Office Director Jim Stritzinger Letter to Assistant Secretary Alan Davidson Supporting No Delay of BEAD Allocation. (Jan. 18, 2023) (Stating that NTIA has “been working tirelessly with the Federal Communications Commission as well as each state and territory” since IIJA was signed); Maine Connectivity Authority President Andrew Butcher Letter in Favor of BEAD Allocation Timeline. (Jan. 13, 2023) (Stating that NTIA’s allocation timeline “reflects Maine’s urgent need to put the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds to work”); Governor John Bel Edwards Letter to Chairwoman Rosenworcel and Assistant Secretary Alan Davidson on Ongoing Efforts to Close Digital Divide. (Jan. 10, 2023) (Praising Chairwoman Rosenworcel and Assistant Secretary Davidson for their “sense of urgency” in enabling states to close the digital divide).

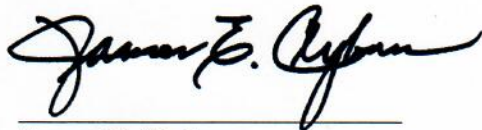
² National Telecommunications and Information Administration, *Advancing Internet for All*. (Jan. 13, 2023), <https://www.ntia.doc.gov/blog/2023/advancing-internet-all>.

³ See, e.g., Mike Conlow, *Do the state challenges to the FCC maps really matter for BEAD?*. (Jan. 11, 2023), <https://mikeconlow.substack.com/p/do-the-state-challenges-to-the-fcc> (Arguing that extension will have little material effect on BEAD allocations).

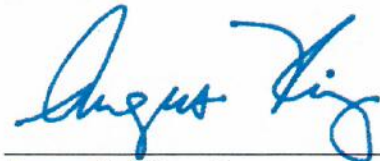
Commission's broadband maps and NTIA's June 30 target date for allocation of BEAD funds provides ample time to ensure the maps are accurate, especially as your agencies continue the already robust technical assistance for implementation of the mapping process and IJA programs generally.⁴ Even after the allocation of BEAD funds is made in June, the FCC will continue to fine-tune the maps based on additional data collection processes—a process that will ultimately inform where projects funded by BEAD Program dollars will be built. This iterative process is the right balance of speed and accuracy envisioned by the bipartisan Broadband DATA Act as well as IJA itself.⁵

Thank you again for your commitment to closing the digital divide in a manner that is both effective and efficient—a manner that will lead to the most equitable outcome. We look forward to our continued work together.

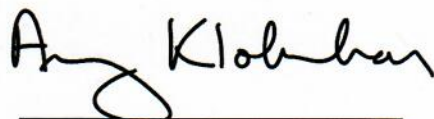
Sincerely,



James E. Clyburn
Member of Congress



Angus S. King, Jr.
Member of Congress



Amy Klobuchar
Member of Congress

⁴ FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel, *Where Are We Now? Broadband Mapping Update*. (Dec. 19, 2022), <https://www.fcc.gov/news-events/notes/2022/12/19/where-are-we-now-broadband-mapping-update> (Noting that the new maps “provide the best picture available to date of where broadband is and is not available across the country, and the maps will only get better over time as the FCC gets input from stakeholders across the country”); *see also*, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, *Broadband by the Numbers: 2022 Edition*. (2022), https://www.internetforall.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/IFA_2022_End_of_Year_Fact_Sheet.pdf (Noting that NTIA has co-hosted 11 local coordination events, held 26 listening sessions, facilitated 24 webinars, and responded to over 360 inquiries to help stakeholders participate in IJA programs).

⁵ Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technological Availability Act, Pub. L. No. 116-130. (Requiring the biannual collection and publication of granular internet service availability data).