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March 29, 2018

The Honorable Ajit Pai  
Chairman  
The Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington, D.C., 20554

Dear Chairman Pai,

I applaud the Federal Communications Commission (Commission) for answering my call and moving forward with Mobility Fund II by releasing the Initial Eligible Areas Map. While I am encouraged by the progress being made, I also understand that we have one chance to get this right. I therefore urge you to reach out to state and local governments to ensure that they are aware of this program and have your full support throughout the challenge process.

The \$4.53 billion this program will bring to high-cost, hard-to-service areas is absolutely critical for rural areas in my state that are struggling to compete in the digital age. While I am aware that the map released by the Commission is only the "initial" map – and I appreciate your explicit clarification in the order that all State, Local, and Tribal Governmental entities are eligible to submit challenges to the Commission for areas they believe have been incorrectly determined to have adequate service – many of our state and local partners are already stretched thin and simply do not have the resources to navigate this process alone.

I request your help in notifying these governmental entities of this opportunity, supporting them through the challenge process, and minimizing any cost burdens that may be associated with it. Submitting a challenge to the Commission should not be a daunting or burdensome task for local governments whose only interest is a desire to improve the quality of life for the people they represent. With increased collaboration between states, local government, and the Commission, I believe that more of these institutions will choose to participate in the challenge process and bring us one step closer to closing the digital divide in this country.

Mobility Fund II has the opportunity to significantly help level the playing field between rural and urban areas, allowing states like mine to compete in a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. Ensuring the eligible areas map reflects the real world experience of real people is essential to the success of this program. I thank you for all of your efforts to get this program where it is today, and I look forward to continuing to work together to ensure that this funding goes to the places that need it the most.

Sincerely,



Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator