



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

August 10, 2018

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senate
172 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Capito:

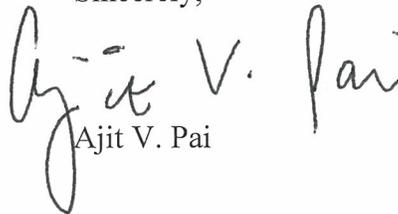
Thank you for your letter regarding the importance of high-speed broadband access to rural Americans. I wholeheartedly agree that closing the digital divide is our foremost mission as an agency, and I appreciate your recognition of the work of the Commission to foster further investment and innovation in the most remote corners of our country.

I agree with you that the Commission's Mobility Fund Phase II auction represents a unique opportunity to accelerate the deployment of wireless services to unserved communities. And I thank you for your support in our work to ensure reliable wireless coverage maps, including our recent improvements to make the challenge process for that upcoming auction more robust.

You have shown me firsthand the difficulties of deploying broadband, and especially high-quality mobile broadband, in the hollers of West Virginia, and the Commission is taking action to ensure an area's topography is addressed as part of the Mobility Fund Phase II auction. Indeed, the framework we adopted for that auction specifically requires that we incorporate a terrain factor into the auction design. This terrain factor will ensure that more funding is available in hard-to-deploy areas such as rural West Virginia. And we have designed the auction so that this approach will not prioritize less expensive networks over flatter terrain—in my mind, all bidders should be on even footing no matter the terrain they cover.

Thank you for your continued commitment to ensuring that rural Americans can access the high-speed broadband services so prevalent in urban America. I look forward to continuing our work together until we close the digital divide. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,


Ajit V. Pai