



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

May 23, 2019

The Honorable John Thune  
United States Senate  
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Thune:

Thank you for your letter regarding broadband mapping. Closing the digital divide is my top priority. I have seen for myself in 45 states, including South Dakota, and the territories of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands what affordable high-speed Internet access can do for a community—for its families, its schools, its hospitals, its farms, its businesses—as well as the impact of its absence.

I agree that using updated and accurate broadband deployment data is critical to bridging the digital divide. We need to understand where broadband is available and where it is not to target our efforts and direct funding to areas that are most in needed. That is why the Commission two basic reforms to the collection of broadband data when I came into office. First, we initiated a new data collection for mobile broadband coverage as part of Phase II of the Mobility fund (which included a robust challenge process). Second, we began a top-to-bottom review of the Form 477 process to ensure that broadband data was more accurate, granular, and ultimately useful to the Commission and the public.

In your letter, you ask the Commission seriously consider verifications mechanisms, specifically a challenge process to improve the validation of data submitted to broadband availability databases. I believe a public feedback mechanism could improve the Commission's broadband coverage maps and Form 477 data. Indeed, as you may know, the Commission's Speed Test App is one way that consumers can currently participate in collecting data about broadband deployment, and it has proven to be a useful tool for assessing service availability. I've asked Commission staff to look into other ways to collect and use accurate data from many sources—including consumers themselves—to assemble a more reliable map. We are interested in developing methods for the submission of reliable, consumer-driven data to better inform the Commission's decision making in this area. We would be happy to receive any input you or your staff might have on how to establish and implement such methods.

I appreciate your continued interest in working with the FCC to close the digital divide and look forward to continuing to collaborate on this issue. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ajit" being the most prominent part.

Ajit V. Pai



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May 23, 2019

The Honorable Mike Rounds  
United States Senate  
502 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Rounds:

Thank you for your letter regarding broadband mapping. Closing the digital divide is my top priority. I have seen for myself in 45 states, including South Dakota, and the territories of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands what affordable high-speed Internet access can do for a community—for its families, its schools, its hospitals, its farms, its businesses—as well as the impact of its absence.

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Sincerely,

Ajit V. Pai



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WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

May 23, 2019

The Honorable Dusty Johnson  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1508 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Johnson:

Thank you for your letter regarding broadband mapping. Closing the digital divide is my top priority. I have seen for myself in 45 states, including South Dakota, and the territories of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands what affordable high-speed Internet access can do for a community—for its families, its schools, its hospitals, its farms, its businesses—as well as the impact of its absence.

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