



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

July 31, 2019

The Honorable Tom O'Halleran
U.S. House of Representatives
126 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman O'Halleran:

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 Arizona, 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.

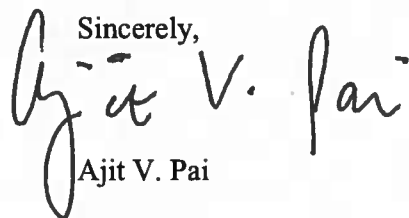
I agree that using updated and accurate broadband deployment data is critical to bridging the digital divide. We need to understand where broadband is available and where it is not to target our efforts and direct funding to areas that are most in needed. That is why the Commission began a top-to-bottom review of the Form 477 process to ensure that broadband data was more accurate, granular, and ultimately useful to the Commission and the public.

After a thorough review of the record and the painstaking work of our career staff, I circulated a Report and Order for consideration at the FCC's August Open Meeting that would result in more granular and more accurate broadband maps through the creation of the Digital Opportunity Data Collection. That means requiring broadband providers to report where they actually offer service below the census block level and incorporating public feedback to ensure up to date and accurate broadband deployment maps.

These updated maps would be used to focus funding to expand broadband through future initiatives such as the second phase of the proposed Rural Digital Opportunity Fund. The Rural Digital Opportunity Fund will complement and build on the success of the CAF Phase II auction of fixed broadband support, which allocated \$1.488 billion to expand broadband to more than 700,000 unserved rural homes and small businesses over the next 10 years. In Arizona, more than \$28.1 million was authorized to providers in May and June, which will connect nearly 7,000 homes and businesses to modern broadband. Once implemented, the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund would provide over \$20 billion over the next decade to connect millions of rural homes and businesses to high-speed broadband, representing the FCC's single biggest step yet to close the digital divide.

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I appreciate your 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,

Ajit V. Pai