



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Joe Manchin
United States Senate
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Manchin:

Thank you for your letter regarding broadband mapping. Closing the digital divide is my top priority. I have seen for myself 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. And while I haven't had the chance to visit Harman's Luxury Cabins in Cabins, West Virginia, I have personally seen a similar reality at Capon Springs and Farms in Capon Springs, where the owner told me the lack of broadband had a material effect on his business.

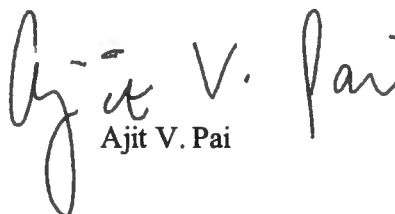
I agree that using updated and accurate broadband deployment data is critical to bridging the digital divide. We need to understand where broadband is available and where it is not to better target our efforts and direct funding to areas that are most in needed. That's why the Commission began a top-to-bottom 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, the FCC adopted a Report and Order in August aimed at generating more granular and more accurate broadband maps through the creation of the "Digital Opportunity Data Collection." We want broadband providers to report where they actually offer service below the census-block level, and we want to include third-party input, such as feedback from the public, 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 (RDOF). The RDOF 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 713,000 unserved rural homes and small businesses over the next 10 years. Once implemented, the RDOF will 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.

I look forward to continuing to collaborate with you to close the digital divide.

Sincerely,


Ajit V. Pai