



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

March 6, 2020

The Honorable Marsha Blackburn
United States Senate
B40B Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Blackburn:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Federal Communications Commission's staff report on the investigation into the Mobility Fund Phase II coverage maps and my recent announcement proposing to establish a new 5G Fund for rural America. Closing the digital divide is my top priority. Ensuring access to the most advanced mobile wireless service is an important part of accomplishing that objective. I have seen firsthand what access to mobile broadband can do for a community—for its families, hospitals, schools, farms, and businesses—and the impact of its absence.

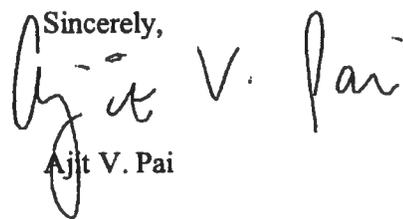
That's why in December 2019, I announced my plan to propose a new 5G Fund to my fellow commissioners that would make available to carriers up to \$9 billion in high-cost Universal Service Fund support over 10 years to deploy advanced 5G mobile wireless services in rural America and would set aside at least \$1 billion specifically for deployments to support precision agriculture needs. We will, as your letter urges, consider the distinct challenges of deploying 5G in rural areas when proposing performance requirements. And you can be assured that I will propose including an adjustment factor in the 5G Fund to address the increased costs of deploying 5G services in more rugged areas.

You also raised concerns about spending Universal Service funds on 5G service while some areas lack 4G LTE service. I agree that we must do better for Americans in rural areas, but it does not make sense for a multi-year support program to fund a technology that will be outpaced by 5G before the end of the program. That would be like focusing our Rural Digital Opportunity Fund on the deployment of 4/1 Mbps fixed broadband over the next decade. I've heard from numerous Members of Congress about the need for the Universal Service Fund to support the deployment of sustainable, future-proofed broadband networks—and I've seen on the ground what those networks can do to revitalize our farms, our ranches, and our small towns. That's why I believe moving forward with a 5G Fund is the right thing for the American public.

Your letter argues that the Commission should rely on more specific parameters when collecting mobile broadband data and that we be open to feedback on coverage maps. Last year, we adopted the Digital Opportunity Data Collection, which will result in the Commission collecting mobile data subject to specific parameters and provide an opportunity for feedback from stakeholders. And I expect the Commission will seek comment on how to incorporate the coverage data available into the 5G Fund.

Page 2—The Honorable Marsha Blackburn

I believe that the 5G Fund represents a unique opportunity to put rural Americans on an equal footing with their urban counterparts as this exciting new technology develops. And I look forward to working with you on this issue. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

March 6, 2020

The Honorable John N. Kennedy
United States Senate
416 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Kennedy:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Federal Communications Commission's staff report on the investigation into the Mobility Fund Phase II coverage maps and my recent announcement proposing to establish a new 5G Fund for rural America. Closing the digital divide is my top priority. Ensuring access to the most advanced mobile wireless service is an important part of accomplishing that objective. I have seen firsthand what access to mobile broadband can do for a community—for its families, hospitals, schools, farms, and businesses—and the impact of its absence.

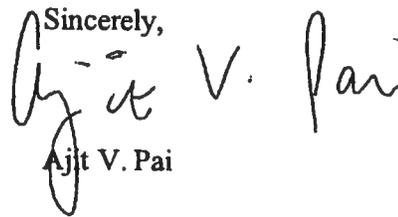
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March 6, 2020

The Honorable Jon Tester
United States Senate
311 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Tester:

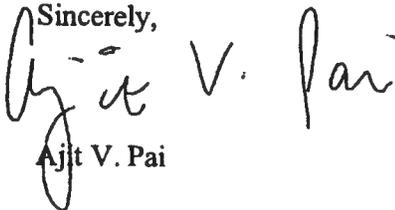
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March 6, 2020

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

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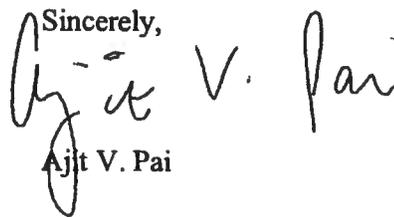
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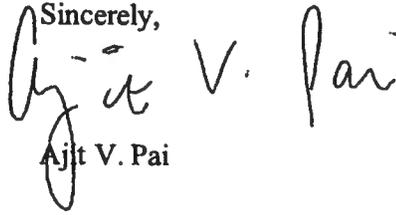
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