



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

May 27, 2020

The Honorable Anna G. Eshoo  
U.S. House of Representatives  
202 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Eshoo:

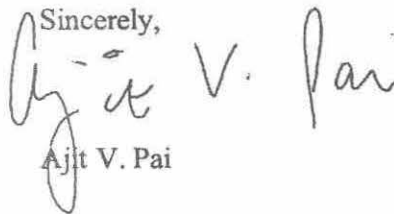
Thank you for your letter regarding broadband mapping and the Commission's implementation of the Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technological Availability (Broadband DATA) Act. Closing the digital divide is my top priority. I have seen for myself what affordable high-speed Internet access can do for a community—for its families, its schools, its hospitals, its farms, its businesses—as well as the impact of its absence, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, and that's why I have endeavored to strengthen the Universal Service Fund's E-Rate and Rural Healthcare programs and to expand broadband funding.

I believe that using updated and accurate broadband deployment data is critical to bridging the digital divide. That's why the Commission adopted in August 2019 the *Digital Opportunity Data Collection (DODC) Report and Order and Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* aimed at generating more granular and more precise broadband maps through the creation of the DODC. The Broadband DATA Act affirms the FCC's approach to collecting more accurate broadband data through our DODC program, and I appreciate Congress's endorsement of that general approach. 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. Accordingly, under the Report and Order, a crowd-sourcing portal will allow individual consumers, as well as state, local, and Tribal government entities, including the community anchor institutions you reference in your letter, to submit public input on the accuracy of the data on the public fixed broadband availability map. As we move forward on the rulemaking in the coming weeks, we will determine how best to incorporate those institutions into the broadband map, consistent with the requirements of the law.

The updated maps will be used to focus funding to expand broadband through future initiatives, such as the second phase of the 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 713,000 unserved rural homes and small businesses over the next 10 years. Once implemented, the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund 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.

In closing, I would reiterate it is vital for Congress to provide the FCC as soon as possible with the appropriations necessary to implement the Broadband DATA Act. Right now, the FCC does not have the funding to carry out the Act, and given the Act's prohibition on the Universal Service Administrative Company performing this mapping work, if Congress does not act soon, this well-intentioned legislation will have the unfortunate effect of delaying rather than expediting the development of better broadband maps. I look forward to working with Congress in the weeks ahead to secure this funding, so that we can ensure that we have the best tools available for bridging the digital divide for the American people.

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,  
  
Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
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May 27, 2020

The Honorable Edward J. Markey  
United States Senate  
255 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Markey:

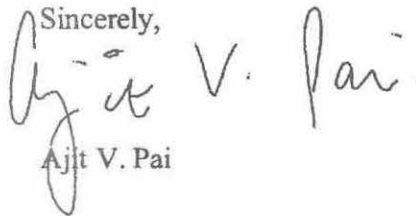
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