



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 15, 2020

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
United States Senate  
521 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Moran:

Thank you for your letter concerning the Commission's April 23, 2020 Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to establish a 5G Fund for rural America. I appreciate your ongoing interest in this matter, as well as your commitment to work with the Commission to obtain funding to implement the Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technology Availability Act (Broadband DATA Act).

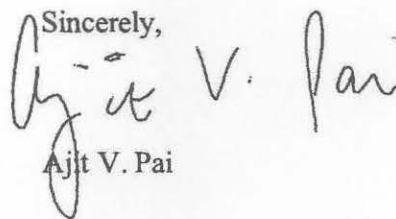
The COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear how critical it is that all Americans have access to digital connectivity and, as you also noted, the pandemic has only accelerated this need. This is particularly true for unserved areas that do not receive any mobile high-cost funding under the legacy support system—a system which continues to award hundreds of millions of dollars a year to already-served areas based upon decades-old funding mechanisms. To change this and help bridge the digital divide, the Commission proposed to create the 5G Fund for Rural America, proposing to spend up to \$9 billion to support 5G deployments across the country and at least \$1 billion specifically for deployments facilitating precision agriculture needs. We sought comment on two potential approaches for moving ahead. The first would be to move to auction in 2021 if we use existing data to assess eligibility, using historic mobile coverage filings to prioritize areas that have historically lacked 3G or 4G LTE service and an adjustment factor to address the relative costs of deploying in more mountainous terrain. The second approach would be to delay an auction until a new mobile data collection is completed in accord with the Broadband DATA Act. Career staff estimate this delay could be lengthy—at least 18-24 months—and is dependent upon the timely appropriation of funds to implement the new statute.

Although I appreciate your suggestion to focus on moving forward with the new mobile broadband data collection more quickly, doing so would not materially change the timeline outlined in the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking because that timeline already assumes implementation as quickly as possible. Nor do we have the resources needed for *any* implementation. In the Digital Opportunity Data Collection rulemaking begun in August 2019, we relied heavily upon the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) for challenge process design, administration, and execution. However, the Broadband DATA Act prohibits the Commission from relying on USAC to assist the Commission with collecting coverage data from service providers and processing challenges to the maps crowdsourced from consumers on the ground. As we repeatedly warned Congress leading up to passage of the Broadband DATA Act, this prohibition means that we cannot complete our work on the maps until we have an independent appropriation to cover the significant costs of fulfilling the Commission's responsibilities under the law. Unfortunately, that has not happened. 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.

It is vital for Congress to provide the FCC as soon as possible with the appropriations necessary to implement the Broadband DATA Act. Commission staff have determined that at least \$65 million is needed to provide start-up costs and to implement the measure for roughly one year, and staff have provided this request to the Appropriations Committees of the U.S. Senate and House as well as the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee. I look forward to working with Congress in the near term 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.

Again, thank you for your willingness to assist us in obtaining implementation funds, and I look forward to working with you to accomplish this goal.

Sincerely,  
  
Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 15, 2020

The Honorable Pat Roberts  
United States Senate  
109 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Roberts:

Thank you for your letter concerning the Commission's April 23, 2020 Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to establish a 5G Fund for rural America. I appreciate your ongoing interest in this matter, as well as your commitment to work with the Commission to obtain funding to implement the Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technology Availability Act (Broadband DATA Act).

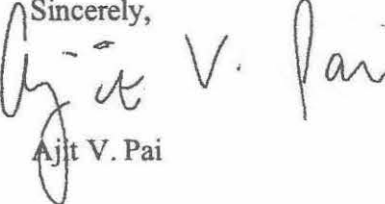
The COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear how critical it is that all Americans have access to digital connectivity and, as you also noted, the pandemic has only accelerated this need. This is particularly true for unserved areas that do not receive any mobile high-cost funding under the legacy support system—a system which continues to award hundreds of millions of dollars a year to already-served areas based upon decades-old funding mechanisms. To change this and help bridge the digital divide, the Commission proposed to create the 5G Fund for Rural America, proposing to spend up to \$9 billion to support 5G deployments across the country and at least \$1 billion specifically for deployments facilitating precision agriculture needs. We sought comment on two potential approaches for moving ahead. The first would be to move to auction in 2021 if we use existing data to assess eligibility, using historic mobile coverage filings to prioritize areas that have historically lacked 3G or 4G LTE service and an adjustment factor to address the relative costs of deploying in more mountainous terrain. The second approach would be to delay an auction until a new mobile data collection is completed in accord with the Broadband DATA Act. Career staff estimate this delay could be lengthy—at least 18-24 months—and is dependent upon the timely appropriation of funds to implement the new statute.

Although I appreciate your suggestion to focus on moving forward with the new mobile broadband data collection more quickly, doing so would not materially change the timeline outlined in the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking because that timeline already assumes implementation as quickly as possible. Nor do we have the resources needed for *any* implementation. In the Digital Opportunity Data Collection rulemaking begun in August 2019, we relied heavily upon the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) for challenge process design, administration, and execution. However, the Broadband DATA Act prohibits the Commission from relying on USAC to assist the Commission with collecting coverage data from service providers and processing challenges to the maps crowdsourced from consumers on the ground. As we repeatedly warned Congress leading up to passage of the Broadband DATA Act, this prohibition means that we cannot complete our work on the maps until we have an independent appropriation to cover the significant costs of fulfilling the Commission's responsibilities under the law. Unfortunately, that has not happened. 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.

It is vital for Congress to provide the FCC as soon as possible with the appropriations necessary to implement the Broadband DATA Act. Commission staff have determined that at least \$65 million is needed to provide start-up costs and to implement the measure for roughly one year, and staff have provided this request to the Appropriations Committees of the U.S. Senate and House as well as the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee. I look forward to working with Congress in the near term 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.

Again, thank you for your willingness to assist us in obtaining implementation funds, and I look forward to working with you to accomplish this goal.

Sincerely,  
  
Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 15, 2020

The Honorable Roger Marshall  
U.S. House of Representatives  
312 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Marshall:

Thank you for your letter concerning the Commission's April 23, 2020 Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to establish a 5G Fund for rural America. I appreciate your ongoing interest in this matter, as well as your commitment to work with the Commission to obtain funding to implement the Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technology Availability Act (Broadband DATA Act).

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear how critical it is that all Americans have access to digital connectivity and, as you also noted, the pandemic has only accelerated this need. This is particularly true for unserved areas that do not receive any mobile high-cost funding under the legacy support system—a system which continues to award hundreds of millions of dollars a year to already-served areas based upon decades-old funding mechanisms. To change this and help bridge the digital divide, the Commission proposed to create the 5G Fund for Rural America, proposing to spend up to \$9 billion to support 5G deployments across the country and at least \$1 billion specifically for deployments facilitating precision agriculture needs. We sought comment on two potential approaches for moving ahead. The first would be to move to auction in 2021 if we use existing data to assess eligibility, using historic mobile coverage filings to prioritize areas that have historically lacked 3G or 4G LTE service and an adjustment factor to address the relative costs of deploying in more mountainous terrain. The second approach would be to delay an auction until a new mobile data collection is completed in accord with the Broadband DATA Act. Career staff estimate this delay could be lengthy—at least 18-24 months—and is dependent upon the timely appropriation of funds to implement the new statute.

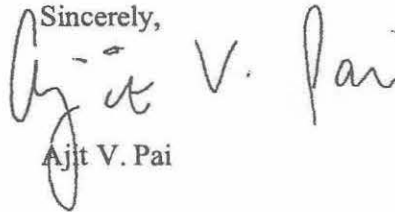
Although I appreciate your suggestion to focus on moving forward with the new mobile broadband data collection more quickly, doing so would not materially change the timeline outlined in the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking because that timeline already assumes implementation as quickly as possible. Nor do we have the resources needed for *any* implementation. In the Digital Opportunity Data Collection rulemaking begun in August 2019, we relied heavily upon the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) for challenge process design, administration, and execution. However, the Broadband DATA Act prohibits the Commission from relying on USAC to assist the Commission with collecting coverage data from service providers and processing challenges to the maps crowdsourced from consumers on the ground. As we repeatedly warned Congress leading up to passage of the Broadband DATA Act, this prohibition means that we cannot complete our work on the maps until we have an independent appropriation to cover the significant costs of fulfilling the Commission's responsibilities under the law. Unfortunately, that has not happened. 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.

It is vital for Congress to provide the FCC as soon as possible with the appropriations necessary to implement the Broadband DATA Act. Commission staff have determined that at least \$65 million is needed to provide start-up costs and to implement the measure for roughly one year, and staff have provided this request to the Appropriations Committees of the U.S. Senate and House as well as the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee. I look forward to working with Congress in the near term 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.

Again, thank you for your willingness to assist us in obtaining implementation funds, and I look forward to working with you to accomplish this goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and a distinct "V".

Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 15, 2020

The Honorable Sharice Davids  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1541 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Davids:

Thank you for your letter concerning the Commission's April 23, 2020 Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to establish a 5G Fund for rural America. I appreciate your ongoing interest in this matter, as well as your commitment to work with the Commission to obtain funding to implement the Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technology Availability Act (Broadband DATA Act).

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear how critical it is that all Americans have access to digital connectivity and, as you also noted, the pandemic has only accelerated this need. This is particularly true for unserved areas that do not receive any mobile high-cost funding under the legacy support system—a system which continues to award hundreds of millions of dollars a year to already-served areas based upon decades-old funding mechanisms. To change this and help bridge the digital divide, the Commission proposed to create the 5G Fund for Rural America, proposing to spend up to \$9 billion to support 5G deployments across the country and at least \$1 billion specifically for deployments facilitating precision agriculture needs. We sought comment on two potential approaches for moving ahead. The first would be to move to auction in 2021 if we use existing data to assess eligibility, using historic mobile coverage filings to prioritize areas that have historically lacked 3G or 4G LTE service and an adjustment factor to address the relative costs of deploying in more mountainous terrain. The second approach would be to delay an auction until a new mobile data collection is completed in accord with the Broadband DATA Act. Career staff estimate this delay could be lengthy—at least 18-24 months—and is dependent upon the timely appropriation of funds to implement the new statute.

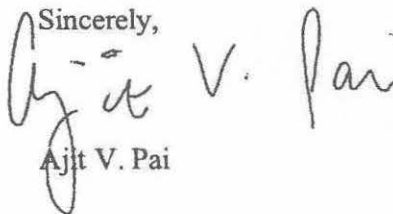
Although I appreciate your suggestion to focus on moving forward with the new mobile broadband data collection more quickly, doing so would not materially change the timeline outlined in the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking because that timeline already assumes implementation as quickly as possible. Nor do we have the resources needed for *any* implementation. In the Digital Opportunity Data Collection rulemaking begun in August 2019, we relied heavily upon the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) for challenge process design, administration, and execution. However, the Broadband DATA Act prohibits the Commission from relying on USAC to assist the Commission with collecting coverage data from service providers and processing challenges to the maps crowdsourced from consumers on the ground. As we repeatedly warned Congress leading up to passage of the Broadband DATA Act, this prohibition means that we cannot complete our work on the maps until we have an independent appropriation to cover the significant costs of fulfilling the Commission's responsibilities under the law. Unfortunately, that has not happened. 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.

It is vital for Congress to provide the FCC as soon as possible with the appropriations necessary to implement the Broadband DATA Act. Commission staff have determined that at least \$65 million is needed to provide start-up costs and to implement the measure for roughly one year, and staff have provided this request to the Appropriations Committees of the U.S. Senate and House as well as the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee. I look forward to working with Congress in the near term 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.

Again, thank you for your willingness to assist us in obtaining implementation funds, and I look forward to working with you to accomplish this goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and a distinct "V".

Ajit V. Pai





OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 15, 2020

The Honorable Ron Estes  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1524 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Estes:

Thank you for your letter concerning the Commission's April 23, 2020 Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to establish a 5G Fund for rural America. I appreciate your ongoing interest in this matter, as well as your commitment to work with the Commission to obtain funding to implement the Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technology Availability Act (Broadband DATA Act).

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear how critical it is that all Americans have access to digital connectivity and, as you also noted, the pandemic has only accelerated this need. This is particularly true for unserved areas that do not receive any mobile high-cost funding under the legacy support system—a system which continues to award hundreds of millions of dollars a year to already-served areas based upon decades-old funding mechanisms. To change this and help bridge the digital divide, the Commission proposed to create the 5G Fund for Rural America, proposing to spend up to \$9 billion to support 5G deployments across the country and at least \$1 billion specifically for deployments facilitating precision agriculture needs. We sought comment on two potential approaches for moving ahead. The first would be to move to auction in 2021 if we use existing data to assess eligibility, using historic mobile coverage filings to prioritize areas that have historically lacked 3G or 4G LTE service and an adjustment factor to address the relative costs of deploying in more mountainous terrain. The second approach would be to delay an auction until a new mobile data collection is completed in accord with the Broadband DATA Act. Career staff estimate this delay could be lengthy—at least 18-24 months—and is dependent upon the timely appropriation of funds to implement the new statute.

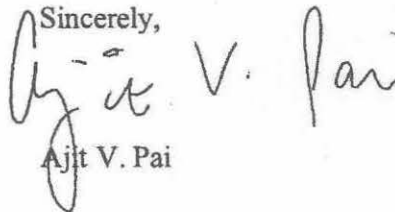
Although I appreciate your suggestion to focus on moving forward with the new mobile broadband data collection more quickly, doing so would not materially change the timeline outlined in the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking because that timeline already assumes implementation as quickly as possible. Nor do we have the resources needed for *any* implementation. In the Digital Opportunity Data Collection rulemaking begun in August 2019, we relied heavily upon the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) for challenge process design, administration, and execution. However, the Broadband DATA Act prohibits the Commission from relying on USAC to assist the Commission with collecting coverage data from service providers and processing challenges to the maps crowdsourced from consumers on the ground. As we repeatedly warned Congress leading up to passage of the Broadband DATA Act, this prohibition means that we cannot complete our work on the maps until we have an independent appropriation to cover the significant costs of fulfilling the Commission's responsibilities under the law. Unfortunately, that has not happened. 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.

It is vital for Congress to provide the FCC as soon as possible with the appropriations necessary to implement the Broadband DATA Act. Commission staff have determined that at least \$65 million is needed to provide start-up costs and to implement the measure for roughly one year, and staff have provided this request to the Appropriations Committees of the U.S. Senate and House as well as the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee. I look forward to working with Congress in the near term 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.

Again, thank you for your willingness to assist us in obtaining implementation funds, and I look forward to working with you to accomplish this goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and a distinct "V".

Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 15, 2020

The Honorable Steve Watkins  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1205 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Watkins:

Thank you for your letter concerning the Commission's April 23, 2020 Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to establish a 5G Fund for rural America. I appreciate your ongoing interest in this matter, as well as your commitment to work with the Commission to obtain funding to implement the Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technology Availability Act (Broadband DATA Act).

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear how critical it is that all Americans have access to digital connectivity and, as you also noted, the pandemic has only accelerated this need. This is particularly true for unserved areas that do not receive any mobile high-cost funding under the legacy support system—a system which continues to award hundreds of millions of dollars a year to already-served areas based upon decades-old funding mechanisms. To change this and help bridge the digital divide, the Commission proposed to create the 5G Fund for Rural America, proposing to spend up to \$9 billion to support 5G deployments across the country and at least \$1 billion specifically for deployments facilitating precision agriculture needs. We sought comment on two potential approaches for moving ahead. The first would be to move to auction in 2021 if we use existing data to assess eligibility, using historic mobile coverage filings to prioritize areas that have historically lacked 3G or 4G LTE service and an adjustment factor to address the relative costs of deploying in more mountainous terrain. The second approach would be to delay an auction until a new mobile data collection is completed in accord with the Broadband DATA Act. Career staff estimate this delay could be lengthy—at least 18-24 months—and is dependent upon the timely appropriation of funds to implement the new statute.

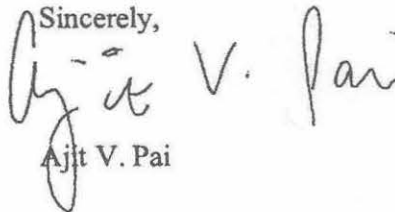
Although I appreciate your suggestion to focus on moving forward with the new mobile broadband data collection more quickly, doing so would not materially change the timeline outlined in the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking because that timeline already assumes implementation as quickly as possible. Nor do we have the resources needed for *any* implementation. In the Digital Opportunity Data Collection rulemaking begun in August 2019, we relied heavily upon the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) for challenge process design, administration, and execution. However, the Broadband DATA Act prohibits the Commission from relying on USAC to assist the Commission with collecting coverage data from service providers and processing challenges to the maps crowdsourced from consumers on the ground. As we repeatedly warned Congress leading up to passage of the Broadband DATA Act, this prohibition means that we cannot complete our work on the maps until we have an independent appropriation to cover the significant costs of fulfilling the Commission's responsibilities under the law. Unfortunately, that has not happened. 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.

It is vital for Congress to provide the FCC as soon as possible with the appropriations necessary to implement the Broadband DATA Act. Commission staff have determined that at least \$65 million is needed to provide start-up costs and to implement the measure for roughly one year, and staff have provided this request to the Appropriations Committees of the U.S. Senate and House as well as the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee. I look forward to working with Congress in the near term 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.

Again, thank you for your willingness to assist us in obtaining implementation funds, and I look forward to working with you to accomplish this goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

Ajit V. Pai