



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE
ACTING CHAIRWOMAN

May 5, 2021

The Honorable Victoria Spartz
U.S. House of Representatives
1523 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Spartz:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to make the broadband deployment data it collects more accurate. The COVID-19 pandemic has made clear that broadband service is no longer a luxury—it's a necessity for school, jobs, healthcare, and more. However, reliable high-speed internet connections are not available in every corner of the country. I believe this needs to be addressed and I share your commitment to finding ways to get 100 percent of Americans connected—including all Hoosiers.

As Congress recognized with passage of Broadband DATA Act in March 2020, the first step toward connecting all Americans is ensuring that we have reliable and accurate information about where broadband service is and is not across the country. With better data we can target our policymaking efforts and financial resources, like universal service funding, to those unserved and underserved areas of the country where support is needed most. It will also help state and local governments and Tribal entities target similar efforts.

We have talked about this problem for years but lacked the necessary focus and determination to get it done. The good news is that Congress in late December 2020 provided the FCC with funding to support the Broadband DATA Act. This made it possible for the agency to develop the complex databases, systems, and processes required to collect, validate, and make the data available. After I became Acting Chairwoman, one of the very first actions I took was to assess the status of this effort. While that review demonstrated that we had an enormous amount of work to do, I am pleased to report that we have made significant progress in just a few months, including the efforts highlighted below. In addition, we are actively exploring further near-term efforts to improve our data and outreach and will seek to make information available to the public as we continue to develop the information collection envisioned by the Broadband DATA Act.

First, shortly after I was designated Acting Chairwoman, I announced the formation of a Broadband Data Task Force to coordinate and expedite the design and construction of new systems for collecting and verifying broadband deployment data. To fully implement the Broadband DATA Act, the Commission must develop entirely new data collection methods and platform so that massive amounts of data from many different sources can be collected, validated and correlated with one another to result in a comprehensive, user-friendly dataset on broadband

availability. The Task Force is leading an intensive cross-agency effort to implement the requirements of the Broadband DATA Act to be sure that our work to more accurately measure and reflect our nation's broadband needs is completed as expeditiously as possible and that we get it right.

Second, consistent with the Broadband DATA Act requirement that we use competitive bidding and procurement processes and in light of new funding for this effort provided by Congress late last December, the agency began the contracting necessary to build new databases and systems. Within two weeks after I became Acting Chairwoman, we initiated and less than three weeks later concluded a competitive procurement process to retain an expert data architect and design firm to work with the Commission's own data and IT systems specialists to assess our existing broadband availability data and mapping systems. The data architect has extensive experience providing data management and integration, geospatial processing and analysis, algorithm development, and other tools, having previously assisted the Commission with implementing our first-in-the-world 600 MHz Broadcast Incentive Auction. As a result of this effort, the Commission already has an initial data flow proposal for the new Broadband Data Collection systems.

Third, we issued a Request for Information (RFI) to jump-start the contracting process for the creation of the Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric. The fabric is a common dataset of all locations in the United States where fixed broadband internet access service can be installed. It will be a key building block of our data collection and will help provide an accurate and comprehensive picture of the availability of fixed broadband service throughout the country. The Commission received a number of responses to the RFI and has conducted meetings with each of the respondents as well as other interested parties in order to explore their production-ready solutions and gain a better understanding of their responses. We are using the information collected through the RFI process to develop a solicitation for the fabric and expect to release a Request for Proposal shortly.

Fourth, we are working with other government agencies to coordinate our efforts. We have engaged our federal partners, including the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, in order to identify what publicly accessible data is available elsewhere in the government. We are also exploring opportunities to collaborate with state and municipal governments—including in Indiana—in order to leverage truly local knowledge. In fact, as our systems and data specifications are developed, we will be reaching out to them to be sure that they are aware of the types and formats of data we will need to assure a consistent and standardized nationwide data collection. We will also encourage these jurisdictions to ensure that their parcel records are fully digitized so that existing parcel data may be incorporated into the early development of the fabric.

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service, increases the amount of crowdsourced data that the Commission receives to assess the state of deployment nationwide. We would welcome your assistance in promoting these tools among your constituents so that we may receive additional on-the-ground speed data regarding broadband services in Indiana.

I look forward to working with you and others in Congress as we continue to improve the Commission's broadband data collection.

Sincerely,

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ACTING CHAIRWOMAN

May 5, 2021

The Honorable Jim Banks
U.S. House of Representatives
1713 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Banks:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to make the broadband deployment data it collects more accurate. The COVID-19 pandemic has made clear that broadband service is no longer a luxury—it's a necessity for school, jobs, healthcare, and more. However, reliable high-speed internet connections are not available in every corner of the country. I believe this needs to be addressed and I share your commitment to finding ways to get 100 percent of Americans connected—including all Hoosiers.

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May 5, 2021

The Honorable Greg Pence
U.S. House of Representatives
211 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Pence:

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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OFFICE OF THE
ACTING CHAIRWOMAN

May 5, 2021

The Honorable André Carson
U.S. House of Representatives
2135 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Carson:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to make the broadband deployment data it collects more accurate. The COVID-19 pandemic has made clear that broadband service is no longer a luxury—it's a necessity for school, jobs, healthcare, and more. However, reliable high-speed internet connections are not available in every corner of the country. I believe this needs to be addressed and I share your commitment to finding ways to get 100 percent of Americans connected—including all Hoosiers.

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May 5, 2021

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U.S. House of Representatives
466 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Hollingsworth:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to make the broadband deployment data it collects more accurate. The COVID-19 pandemic has made clear that broadband service is no longer a luxury—it's a necessity for school, jobs, healthcare, and more. However, reliable high-speed internet connections are not available in every corner of the country. I believe this needs to be addressed and I share your commitment to finding ways to get 100 percent of Americans connected—including all Hoosiers.

As Congress recognized with passage of Broadband DATA Act in March 2020, the first step toward connecting all Americans is ensuring that we have reliable and accurate information about where broadband service is and is not across the country. With better data we can target our policymaking efforts and financial resources, like universal service funding, to those unserved and underserved areas of the country where support is needed most. It will also help state and local governments and Tribal entities target similar efforts.

We have talked about this problem for years but lacked the necessary focus and determination to get it done. The good news is that Congress in late December 2020 provided the FCC with funding to support the Broadband DATA Act. This made it possible for the agency to develop the complex databases, systems, and processes required to collect, validate, and make the data available. After I became Acting Chairwoman, one of the very first actions I took was to assess the status of this effort. While that review demonstrated that we had an enormous amount of work to do, I am pleased to report that we have made significant progress in just a few months, including the efforts highlighted below. In addition, we are actively exploring further near-term efforts to improve our data and outreach and will seek to make information available to the public as we continue to develop the information collection envisioned by the Broadband DATA Act.

First, shortly after I was designated Acting Chairwoman, I announced the formation of a Broadband Data Task Force to coordinate and expedite the design and construction of new systems for collecting and verifying broadband deployment data. To fully implement the Broadband DATA Act, the Commission must develop entirely new data collection methods and platform so that massive amounts of data from many different sources can be collected, validated and correlated with one another to result in a comprehensive, user-friendly dataset on broadband

availability. The Task Force is leading an intensive cross-agency effort to implement the requirements of the Broadband DATA Act to be sure that our work to more accurately measure and reflect our nation's broadband needs is completed as expeditiously as possible and that we get it right.

Second, consistent with the Broadband DATA Act requirement that we use competitive bidding and procurement processes and in light of new funding for this effort provided by Congress late last December, the agency began the contracting necessary to build new databases and systems. Within two weeks after I became Acting Chairwoman, we initiated and less than three weeks later concluded a competitive procurement process to retain an expert data architect and design firm to work with the Commission's own data and IT systems specialists to assess our existing broadband availability data and mapping systems. The data architect has extensive experience providing data management and integration, geospatial processing and analysis, algorithm development, and other tools, having previously assisted the Commission with implementing our first-in-the-world 600 MHz Broadcast Incentive Auction. As a result of this effort, the Commission already has an initial data flow proposal for the new Broadband Data Collection systems.

Third, we issued a Request for Information (RFI) to jump-start the contracting process for the creation of the Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric. The fabric is a common dataset of all locations in the United States where fixed broadband internet access service can be installed. It will be a key building block of our data collection and will help provide an accurate and comprehensive picture of the availability of fixed broadband service throughout the country. The Commission received a number of responses to the RFI and has conducted meetings with each of the respondents as well as other interested parties in order to explore their production-ready solutions and gain a better understanding of their responses. We are using the information collected through the RFI process to develop a solicitation for the fabric and expect to release a Request for Proposal shortly.

Fourth, we are working with other government agencies to coordinate our efforts. We have engaged our federal partners, including the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, in order to identify what publicly accessible data is available elsewhere in the government. We are also exploring opportunities to collaborate with state and municipal governments—including in Indiana—in order to leverage truly local knowledge. In fact, as our systems and data specifications are developed, we will be reaching out to them to be sure that they are aware of the types and formats of data we will need to assure a consistent and standardized nationwide data collection. We will also encourage these jurisdictions to ensure that their parcel records are fully digitized so that existing parcel data may be incorporated into the early development of the fabric.

Finally, the Commission has stepped up its outreach efforts to consumers and other stakeholders. We created a new public-facing website (<https://www.fcc.gov/BroadbandData>) which provides a go-to source for Commission orders, public notices, and other educational materials as they become available. As a component of this website, we have created a new public portal through which consumers can share their broadband experiences to help inform the work of the Task Force. We are also encouraging consumers to download the FCC Speed Test app, which in addition to providing consumers with information about their mobile broadband

Page 3—The Honorable Trey Hollingsworth

service, increases the amount of crowdsourced data that the Commission receives to assess the state of deployment nationwide. We would welcome your assistance in promoting these tools among your constituents so that we may receive additional on-the-ground speed data regarding broadband services in Indiana.

I look forward to working with you and others in Congress as we continue to improve the Commission's broadband data collection.

Sincerely,

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Jessica Rosenworcel



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE
ACTING CHAIRWOMAN

May 5, 2021

The Honorable Larry Bucshon
U.S. House of Representatives
2313 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Bucshon:

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE
ACTING CHAIRWOMAN

May 5, 2021

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U.S. House of Representatives
1314 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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