

FRENCH HILL

2ND DISTRICT, ARKANSAS

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY,
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MONETARY POLICY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTOR PROTECTION,
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FINTECH TASKFORCE

CARES ACT CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMISSION

COMMISSIONER



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

October 15, 2021

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The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel
Acting Chairwoman
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street NE
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Acting Chairwoman Rosenworcel:

I write to you today to inform you that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is the latest recipient of my monthly Golden Fleece award for its delayed release of broadband maps.

As you are aware, in 2020 Congress enacted the bipartisan Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technological Availability (DATA) Act. The law provides \$98 million to fund the FCC's broadband mapping effort. The law also reforms the FCC's broadband data collection and mapping process to create more accurate and granular broadband availability maps.

On March 10, 2020, during a hearing conducted by the Senate Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government (FSGG), you stated that the FCC can "radically improve"¹ its broadband maps "within three-to-six months."² in the This statement was restated on March 11, 2020, before the House Appropriations Committee's FSGG Subcommittee.³ My fellow Arkansans depending on the new FCC broadband maps and I were disappointed when we heard that these maps would not be ready until 2022.⁴

I request information from you as to why the new FCC broadband maps are delayed. I fear that delayed broadband maps will negatively impact the effective, efficient use of federal program dollars that rely on the broadband maps to ensure that federal dollars are used appropriately.

¹ Review of the FY2021 Budget Request for the FCC: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Fin. Servs. & Gen. Gov't of the S. Comm. on Appropriations, 116th Cong. (Mar. 10, 2020) (response of Comm'r Rosenworcel to Sen. Lankford).

² Review of the FY2021 Budget Request for the FCC: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Fin. Servs. & Gen. Gov't of the S. Comm. on Appropriations, 116th Cong. (Mar. 10, 2020) (response of Comm'r Rosenworcel to Sen. Lankford).

³ FCC Budget Request for FY2021: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Fin. Servs. & Gen. Gov't of the H. Comm. on Appropriations, 116th Cong. (Mar. 11, 2020) (statement of Comm'r Rosenworcel).

⁴ FCC Open Meeting (Feb. 17, 2021), <https://recapd.com/w-Lxkklp/9d363b57a2879929795e31998de271/>.

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Access to broadband ensures that Americans and Arkansans have access to work, go to school, access telehealth, etc. Broadband has become an essential part of American life in the 21st century. I respectfully request that you provide the following information to my office by November 19, 2021:

1. Information on why the new broadband maps are delayed.
2. A detailed timeline of when the FCC will produce the completed new maps.
3. Detailed information on how the FCC will use funds from the DATA Act to develop the new broadband maps.
4. Information on how the FCC plans to work with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) on the broadband mapping efforts. This coordination is required by law.
5. Any actions you and the FCC plan to take expedite the already delayed broadband maps.

It is critical that the FCC uses the \$98 million dollars that was appropriated to fund the new broadband maps appropriately and in a timely manner. States and localities must have detailed information so they can accurately use the \$65 billion dollars. It is imperative that funding allocated to broadband is used well so we do not waste taxpayer money on an already expensive problem.

Arkansas is 41st in the nation for broadband access⁵ and still faces a pressing digital divide, where over 80% of the state lives in rural areas. I am concerned that delays in completing these maps harms the ability of my state to distribute critical broadband funds in an accurate and timely manner.

⁵ Talk Business & Politics; (2021, March 31). Broadband improvement district measure Clears Arkansas House, heads to Senate. KATV. Retrieved September 28, 2021, from <https://katv.com/news/local/broadband-improvement-district-measure-clears-arkansas-house-heads-to-senate>.

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Should you require any additional authority from Congress to address these concerns, I urge you to notify me as soon as possible. My contact for the request is Amelia Allert and she can be reached by email at Amelia.Allert@mail.house.gov and on the phone at (202) 225-2506. I sincerely thank you for your consideration and look forward to working with you to address this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "French Hill". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "F".

French Hill
Member of Congress