



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE
CHAIRWOMAN

December 13, 2021

The Honorable Mike Quigley
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
U.S. House of Representatives
2000 Rayburn House Office Building (G Floor)
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Quigley:

On July 8, 2021, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report entitled “FCC Should Analyze Small Business Speed Needs” (Report). The Report responds to a provision in the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 as well as a request for GAO to examine broadband for small businesses. Among other objectives, this Report examines: (1) small business access to broadband and how the FCC’s Universal Service and other broadband funding programs may better serve small businesses; (2) the extent to which the FCC’s broadband speed benchmark meets the needs of small businesses; and, (3) the support provided by the Small Business Administration relating to small business access or use of broadband. GAO examined the Connect America Fund within the Commission’s Universal Service Fund high-cost program because while no federal funding program is geared toward small businesses access to broadband in particular, it represents the largest current program for broadband deployment and supports locations that include significant numbers of small businesses. In the Report, GAO recommends that the Commission solicit stakeholder input, analyze small business broadband speed needs, and incorporate the results of this analysis into the speed benchmark for broadband.

I do not believe the FCC’s current speed benchmark for broadband, 25 megabits per second download and 3 megabits per second download, is adequate. As GAO points out, the FCC’s speed benchmark has remained at 25/3 Mbps since 2015, despite major changes in demand for broadband in the intervening years. We need to set audacious goals if we want to do big things. The recent Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act generally requires new projects to meet a 100/20 Mbps threshold for funding and we need to take that into account as we consider the FCC’s speed benchmark.

Moreover, as GAO recommends, the FCC intends to seek comment regarding the broadband needs of small businesses when it initiates its next Section 706 inquiry to determine whether advanced telecommunications capability is being deployed to all Americans in a reasonable and timely fashion.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Report and would be happy to discuss further if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

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Jessica Rosenworcel



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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December 13, 2021

The Honorable Steve Womack
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ranking Member Womack:

On July 8, 2021, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report entitled “FCC Should Analyze Small Business Speed Needs” (Report). The Report responds to a provision in the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 as well as a request for GAO to examine broadband for small businesses. Among other objectives, this Report examines: (1) small business access to broadband and how the FCC’s Universal Service and other broadband funding programs may better serve small businesses; (2) the extent to which the FCC’s broadband speed benchmark meets the needs of small businesses; and, (3) the support provided by the Small Business Administration relating to small business access or use of broadband. GAO examined the Connect America Fund within the Commission’s Universal Service Fund high-cost program because while no federal funding program is geared toward small businesses access to broadband in particular, it represents the largest current program for broadband deployment and supports locations that include significant numbers of small businesses. In the Report, GAO recommends that the Commission solicit stakeholder input, analyze small business broadband speed needs, and incorporate the results of this analysis into the speed benchmark for broadband.

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December 13, 2021

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
United States Senate
S-128 The Capital Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Van Hollen:

On July 8, 2021, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report entitled “FCC Should Analyze Small Business Speed Needs” (Report). The Report responds to a provision in the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 as well as a request for GAO to examine broadband for small businesses. Among other objectives, this Report examines: (1) small business access to broadband and how the FCC’s Universal Service and other broadband funding programs may better serve small businesses; (2) the extent to which the FCC’s broadband speed benchmark meets the needs of small businesses; and, (3) the support provided by the Small Business Administration relating to small business access or use of broadband. GAO examined the Connect America Fund within the Commission’s Universal Service Fund high-cost program because while no federal funding program is geared toward small businesses access to broadband in particular, it represents the largest current program for broadband deployment and supports locations that include significant numbers of small businesses. In the Report, GAO recommends that the Commission solicit stakeholder input, analyze small business broadband speed needs, and incorporate the results of this analysis into the speed benchmark for broadband.

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December 13, 2021

The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
United States Senate
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Ranking Member Hyde-Smith:

On July 8, 2021, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report entitled “FCC Should Analyze Small Business Speed Needs” (Report). The Report responds to a provision in the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 as well as a request for GAO to examine broadband for small businesses. Among other objectives, this Report examines: (1) small business access to broadband and how the FCC’s Universal Service and other broadband funding programs may better serve small businesses; (2) the extent to which the FCC’s broadband speed benchmark meets the needs of small businesses; and, (3) the support provided by the Small Business Administration relating to small business access or use of broadband. GAO examined the Connect America Fund within the Commission’s Universal Service Fund high-cost program because while no federal funding program is geared toward small businesses access to broadband in particular, it represents the largest current program for broadband deployment and supports locations that include significant numbers of small businesses. In the Report, GAO recommends that the Commission solicit stakeholder input, analyze small business broadband speed needs, and incorporate the results of this analysis into the speed benchmark for broadband.

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December 13, 2021

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chair
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Madam Chair:

On July 8, 2021, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report entitled “FCC Should Analyze Small Business Speed Needs” (Report). The Report responds to a provision in the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 as well as a request for GAO to examine broadband for small businesses. Among other objectives, this Report examines: (1) small business access to broadband and how the FCC’s Universal Service and other broadband funding programs may better serve small businesses; (2) the extent to which the FCC’s broadband speed benchmark meets the needs of small businesses; and, (3) the support provided by the Small Business Administration relating to small business access or use of broadband. GAO examined the Connect America Fund within the Commission’s Universal Service Fund high-cost program because while no federal funding program is geared toward small businesses access to broadband in particular, it represents the largest current program for broadband deployment and supports locations that include significant numbers of small businesses. In the Report, GAO recommends that the Commission solicit stakeholder input, analyze small business broadband speed needs, and incorporate the results of this analysis into the speed benchmark for broadband.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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December 13, 2021

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
425 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Ranking Member Wicker:

On July 8, 2021, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report entitled “FCC Should Analyze Small Business Speed Needs” (Report). The Report responds to a provision in the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 as well as a request for GAO to examine broadband for small businesses. Among other objectives, this Report examines: (1) small business access to broadband and how the FCC’s Universal Service and other broadband funding programs may better serve small businesses; (2) the extent to which the FCC’s broadband speed benchmark meets the needs of small businesses; and, (3) the support provided by the Small Business Administration relating to small business access or use of broadband. GAO examined the Connect America Fund within the Commission’s Universal Service Fund high-cost program because while no federal funding program is geared toward small businesses access to broadband in particular, it represents the largest current program for broadband deployment and supports locations that include significant numbers of small businesses. In the Report, GAO recommends that the Commission solicit stakeholder input, analyze small business broadband speed needs, and incorporate the results of this analysis into the speed benchmark for broadband.

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December 13, 2021

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone:

On July 8, 2021, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report entitled “FCC Should Analyze Small Business Speed Needs” (Report). The Report responds to a provision in the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 as well as a request for GAO to examine broadband for small businesses. Among other objectives, this Report examines: (1) small business access to broadband and how the FCC’s Universal Service and other broadband funding programs may better serve small businesses; (2) the extent to which the FCC’s broadband speed benchmark meets the needs of small businesses; and, (3) the support provided by the Small Business Administration relating to small business access or use of broadband. GAO examined the Connect America Fund within the Commission’s Universal Service Fund high-cost program because while no federal funding program is geared toward small businesses access to broadband in particular, it represents the largest current program for broadband deployment and supports locations that include significant numbers of small businesses. In the Report, GAO recommends that the Commission solicit stakeholder input, analyze small business broadband speed needs, and incorporate the results of this analysis into the speed benchmark for broadband.

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December 13, 2021

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers:

On July 8, 2021, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report entitled “FCC Should Analyze Small Business Speed Needs” (Report). The Report responds to a provision in the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 as well as a request for GAO to examine broadband for small businesses. Among other objectives, this Report examines: (1) small business access to broadband and how the FCC’s Universal Service and other broadband funding programs may better serve small businesses; (2) the extent to which the FCC’s broadband speed benchmark meets the needs of small businesses; and, (3) the support provided by the Small Business Administration relating to small business access or use of broadband. GAO examined the Connect America Fund within the Commission’s Universal Service Fund high-cost program because while no federal funding program is geared toward small businesses access to broadband in particular, it represents the largest current program for broadband deployment and supports locations that include significant numbers of small businesses. In the Report, GAO recommends that the Commission solicit stakeholder input, analyze small business broadband speed needs, and incorporate the results of this analysis into the speed benchmark for broadband.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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December 13, 2021

The Honorable Gary Peters
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Peters:

On July 8, 2021, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report entitled “FCC Should Analyze Small Business Speed Needs” (Report). The Report responds to a provision in the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 as well as a request for GAO to examine broadband for small businesses. Among other objectives, this Report examines: (1) small business access to broadband and how the FCC’s Universal Service and other broadband funding programs may better serve small businesses; (2) the extent to which the FCC’s broadband speed benchmark meets the needs of small businesses; and, (3) the support provided by the Small Business Administration relating to small business access or use of broadband. GAO examined the Connect America Fund within the Commission’s Universal Service Fund high-cost program because while no federal funding program is geared toward small businesses access to broadband in particular, it represents the largest current program for broadband deployment and supports locations that include significant numbers of small businesses. In the Report, GAO recommends that the Commission solicit stakeholder input, analyze small business broadband speed needs, and incorporate the results of this analysis into the speed benchmark for broadband.

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December 13, 2021

The Honorable Rob Portman
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
442 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Ranking Member Portman:

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December 13, 2021

The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney
Chairwoman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Maloney:

On July 8, 2021, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report entitled “FCC Should Analyze Small Business Speed Needs” (Report). The Report responds to a provision in the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 as well as a request for GAO to examine broadband for small businesses. Among other objectives, this Report examines: (1) small business access to broadband and how the FCC’s Universal Service and other broadband funding programs may better serve small businesses; (2) the extent to which the FCC’s broadband speed benchmark meets the needs of small businesses; and, (3) the support provided by the Small Business Administration relating to small business access or use of broadband. GAO examined the Connect America Fund within the Commission’s Universal Service Fund high-cost program because while no federal funding program is geared toward small businesses access to broadband in particular, it represents the largest current program for broadband deployment and supports locations that include significant numbers of small businesses. In the Report, GAO recommends that the Commission solicit stakeholder input, analyze small business broadband speed needs, and incorporate the results of this analysis into the speed benchmark for broadband.

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December 13, 2021

The Honorable James R. Comer
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
2471 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ranking Member Comer:

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