



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE
CHAIRWOMAN

July 29, 2022

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

Dear Representatives Pence:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Broadband Interagency Coordination Act and the need for coordination of federal funding for broadband deployment. I believe high-speed, high-quality broadband is essential for full participation in modern American life and assure you that the Federal Communications Commission is committed to closing the digital divide. I also believe that funds devoted to broadband deployment must be allocated efficiently and in accordance with good governance principles.

The Broadband Interagency Coordination Act has been instrumental in facilitating a productive dialogue between and among the Commission, the Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) as we implement and administer our respective broadband funding programs as directed by Congress. As required under the Act, the agencies entered into an agreement on June 25, 2021, to share information on existing and planned broadband projects and to coordinate and harmonize these efforts. On July 1, 2022, as required by the Act, the Commission released a Public Notice initiating an inquiry into the effectiveness of the agreement, ideas for improvement, and any suggestions about available data to inform interagency coordination. We will carefully consider the input we receive in response to this request and report to Congress on our assessments and conclusions.

However, I want you to know that the Commission's efforts in this area extend beyond just compliance with the letter of the Act. In fact, an earlier memorandum of understanding (MOU) with USDA was signed in 2014 to prevent duplication with broadband programs at the Rural Utilities Service. In early 2021, in anticipation of the heightened need to coordinate on newly established federal funding programs, USDA, NTIA, and the Commission began regular coordination meetings that will continue for the foreseeable future. Most recently, on May 6, 2022, the three agencies cited in the Broadband Interagency Coordination Act joined with the Department of Treasury in a separate MOU to further enhance our coordination, in light of its support for broadband initiatives through its new Capital Projects Fund. This agreement builds on the efforts of the Broadband Interagency Coordination Act, and we are continuing to explore ways to further our engagement with federal and state partners to promote efficient deployment.

I would also note that interagency coordination efforts—including with state stakeholders—will be smoother, swifter, and more accurate thanks to new and improved data resources now under development at the Commission. One of my first acts as Acting Chairwoman was to establish a Broadband Data Task Force to oversee the agency’s comprehensive efforts to improve the way the agency collects and depicts the availability of both fixed and mobile broadband. The Task Force has developed the Broadband Data Collection system, a complex set of interrelated systems and processes to collect, validate, and publish complete, granular, and reliable data on broadband availability, fulfilling requirements in the Broadband DATA Act. The initial data collection is now underway. This fall, we expect to publish the first availability maps created from this new data. NTIA will use this data to identify areas eligible for funding for its Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program.

In addition, pursuant to requirements in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the Commission is working to establish a Deployment Locations Map that will provide a comprehensive view of federal funding of broadband infrastructure. The Deployment Locations Map will identify locations served by federally funded infrastructure, as well as provide detailed data for each agency’s funding programs, including network details, company names, project timelines, and broadband speeds, making it a valuable tool for a wide range of stakeholders.

I hope that this information is useful. Please let me know if you have questions or if I may be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jessica Rosenworcel", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jessica Rosenworcel