

Carr Applauds Introduction of Bipartisan “CLOSE THE GAP Act”

Legislation by Sen. John Barrasso and Sen. Kyrsten Sinema proposes smart set of infrastructure reforms to accelerate rural Internet builds

WASHINGTON, DC, September 20, 2023—Today, Senator John Barrasso and Senator Kyrsten Sinema introduced legislation that would accelerate access to high-speed Internet across rural and remote parts of the country. It would do so by modernizing the cumbersome permitting process that has delayed broadband infrastructure builds on Federal lands. Senator Barrasso is the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, whose jurisdiction covers Federal lands. Senator Sinema is a member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, whose jurisdiction covers broadband and the FCC.

Commissioner Carr issued the following statement:

“I want to applaud Senator Barrasso and Senator Sinema for their strong leadership and smart set of permitting reforms that would accelerate high-speed Internet builds across rural and remote parts of the country. For too long, a cumbersome and outdated permitting process has delayed and deterred broadband builds on Federal lands—areas where installing Internet infrastructure is vital to reaching those communities that remain on the wrong side of the digital divide. I have had the chance to visit with broadband builders in Wyoming and hear directly from them about the broadband infrastructure projects that are laying fallow due to a slow and opaque process for building on federal lands. This legislation would end these delays by streamlining and modernizing this permitting process. I hope this legislation becomes law soon considering the billions of dollars that are now available to deploy broadband to unserved areas—funds that would otherwise get caught up in red tape.”

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