

United States Senate

Jan. 10, 2023

Alan Davidson
Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
Herbert C. Hoover Building (HCHB)
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C.20230

Dear Assistant Secretary Davidson,

The continued deployment of high-speed broadband has been one of my highest priorities since coming to Congress in 2017. Too often I have visited with community leaders only to learn that broadband service is either unreliable or non-existent. The lack of high-speed broadband access leaves residents, farmers, and business leaders unable to utilize technology and basic forms of 21st century communication, which will continue be a basic underlying requirement for the future growth and prosperity of our communities.

Local broadband providers across Kansas have worked diligently to grow their networks and extend fiber to as many homes and businesses as possible. But inaccurate and incomplete broadband maps have prevented funding from flowing too many of the communities most in need of federal resources. We continue to have too many communities that are considered by the FCC to be served, but in reality, lack the ability to contact the service provider or record or receive any level of customer support to improve existing connectivity.

I have spoken before about the importance of the FCC's broadband maps, but the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's decision to base the allocation of funding for the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) program solely on the data from the FCC's broadband maps makes the integrity and accuracy of the FCC's maps the highest priority for myself and Kansas' broadband providers.

Unfortunately, the timeline allowed by NTIA to submit challenges and improve the accuracy of the maps has proven too aggressive for many Kansas broadband providers, community leaders and residents. I respectfully request the NTIA delay the Jan. 13, 2023, deadline for submissions to the FCC's broadband map for consideration in the BEAD allocation process and allow broadband providers, community leaders and residents an additional 90 days to submit challenges to the map. Our highest priority through this entire process should be the accuracy of the maps to ensure federal dollars are being properly allocated to the states most in need of additional resources.

Kansas is a largely rural state, which makes connectivity to some communities and families both difficult and costly. Funding from the NTIA's BEAD program will be vital in helping our state continue its efforts to connect homes and businesses.

I strongly encourage you to consider allowing all states more time to improve the FCC's broadband map and ensure federal resources are being allocated in most efficient and effective manner possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. W. Marshall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Roger Marshall, M.D.

U.S. Senate