

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 4, 2022

Assistant Secretary Alan Davidson
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
1401 Constitution Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

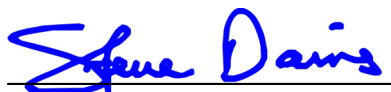
Dear Assistant Secretary Davidson,

Closing the digital divide has long been a bipartisan priority for those living in rural states. Over the last two years, Congress has distributed billions of dollars to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and other Federal agencies to close this divide. It is now more important than ever that these agencies ensure that broadband funding goes to unserved areas and not to overbuild existing reliable broadband infrastructure in areas where broadband providers serve or have committed to serve. This not only wastes Federal funds on areas that do not need it, but also suppresses future deployment in communities in need of opportunities today.

NTIA has an opportunity to make substantial impact on connecting rural America. However, doing so will require that your agency outline rules that specifically prohibit overbuilding and that set clear criteria to ensure projects targeted at unserved areas are actually prioritized. The regulations and methodology for the distribution of these funds must prioritize projects that are connecting customers and communities to broadband for the first time and avoid projects in areas where reliable broadband is already being provided or where there is an enforceable commitment to build high-speed broadband using federal or state funds. Further, you must work in concert with other broadband programs to avoid duplication of state or federal government efforts and your department should ensure that all technological options are on the table to bring broadband service to unserved areas. This will ensure that all customers, regardless of location have the opportunity to benefit from this program.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to continuing to work with you to bridge the rural broadband gap and finally connect our most unserved areas.

Sincerely,




Steve Daines
United States Senator



Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator



Thom Tillis
United States Senator



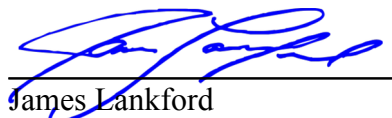
John Barrasso, M.D.
United States Senator



Marco Rubio
United States Senator



Mike Braun
United States Senator



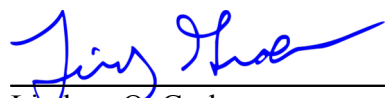
James Lankford
United States Senator



Cynthia M. Lummis
United States Senator



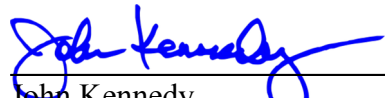
James E. Risch
United States Senator



Lindsey O. Graham
United States Senator




Tommy Tuberville
United States Senator



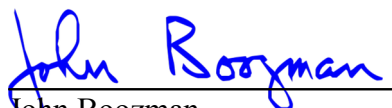
John Kennedy
United States Senator



Mike Crapo
United States Senator



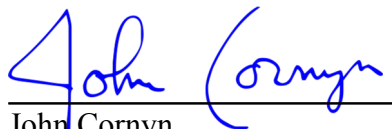
Ted Cruz
United States Senator



John Boozman
United States Senator



Richard Burr
United States Senator



John Cornyn
United States Senator



James M. Inhofe
United States Senator



Roger Marshall, M.D.
United States Senator