

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

January 10, 2023

The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel
Chairwoman
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street, NE
Washington, DC 20554

The Honorable Alan Davidson
Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Chairwoman Rosenworcel and Assistant Secretary Davidson:

I write to urge the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to extend the deadline to submit any broadband serviceable location fabric and availability challenges to the FCC's broadband maps until March 14, 2023. In addition, any challenge submitted on or before the extended deadline ought to be considered in determining Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) funding. According to the Broadband DATA Act (P.L. 116-130), the FCC's broadband maps serve as the foundation for assessing coverage. Furthermore, the same statute provides that the challenge process be "user friendly" and "promote participation." Therefore, it is paramount that the maps be accurate, and states, localities and tribes have time to provide ample feedback.

I have heard from stakeholders across Nebraska regarding their ability to accurately and effectively challenge both fabric and coverage data, incorporated into the broadband maps. Both the FCC and the NTIA have a shared mission to improve broadband deployment across the United States. Broadband maps, created by the FCC, serve to identify broadband coverage levels and the NTIA allocates broadband funding based on these maps. This funding made available by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) is distributed using a need-based formula. In order to determine which areas are served and underserved, we must begin with an accurate underlying fabric.

It is clear that more work needs to build a map that reflects the current state of broadband across this nation. In my home state of Nebraska, county leaders have found hundreds of missing locations in their communities. Other state officials estimate that thousands more locations could still be missing. These cases only serve to highlight the significant need for more complete data. I recognize the challenge of building a perfect map, but we must strive to gather as much information as possible from those who are actively engaging in this important process.

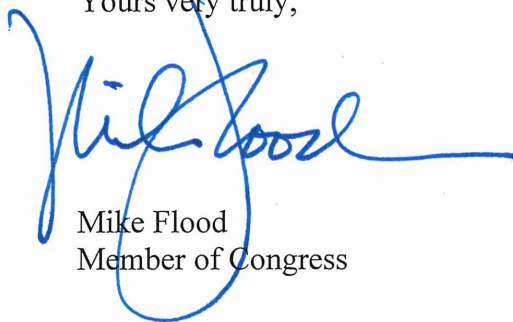
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We have a shared goal of creating effective and accurate maps, and we hope to ensure this process achieves that goal. Our communities are ready for fast, reliable internet. I understand the need to quickly establish and create this mapping data in order to distribute funds to unserved and underserved areas; however, we cannot sacrifice speed for accuracy. Working from incomplete maps only serves to shortchange and undermine the important work that people are already doing in Nebraska and across this nation.

As a member of Congress, I am committed to ensuring that my constituents – farmers, students, business leaders, and so many others – have fast, reliable internet and can fully enter into the digital age. I applaud your efforts to develop the tools and training for public input in the broadband mapping process. I have encouraged the use of these resources by stakeholder across Nebraska's First District. I am asking that by extending the challenge deadline, you ensure that these resources can be fully utilized and the goal of creating accurate data and closing the digital divide can be wholly achieved.

Thank you for your consideration of this measure and I looking forward to your prompt response, as the current challenge deadline is fast approaching.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Flood", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mike Flood
Member of Congress

cc: Governor Jim Pillen
Nebraska Public Service Commission
Senator Suzanne Geist
Senator Bruce Bostelman
Senator Tom Brandt