

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 13, 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:

Thank you for your leadership at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) in administering critical federal broadband programs. We appreciate the efforts of the FCC to develop accurate broadband maps, as mandated by the bipartisan Broadband DATA Act (P.L. 116-130), and of the NTIA to leverage accurate information in distribution of Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program funding through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58). However, we write as Representatives of the bi-state Kansas City metropolitan region to urge the FCC and NTIA to extend the timeframe to submit challenges to the accuracy of the FCC's broadband maps by 60 days.

On November 18, 2022, the FCC unveiled the pre-production draft of the new national broadband maps.¹ The Administration identified the deadline of January 13, 2023, as the best opportunity for eligible entities to submit challenges in time for the FCC to include corrections in the final version of the map that will be used to allocate broadband funding in the summer of 2023.² The short two-month timeframe established by the Administration to understand, identify, and report discrepancies has proved too aggressive for many communities including our community leaders. Last week, the Mid-America Regional Council, the nonprofit association of city and county governments and the metropolitan planning organization for the bistate Kansas City region, wrote a letter to the FCC and NTIA requesting an extension.³ The letter notes, "the current deadline of January 13 is extremely challenging and limits participation at all levels."

¹ FCC, [*FCC Releases New National Broadband Maps*](#) (November 18, 2022).

² NTIA, [*Biden-Harris Administration Announces Timeline for National High-Speed Internet Deployment*](#) (November 10, 2022).

³ Mid-America Regional Council Letter to the FCC and NTIA (January 4, 2022) (Letter on file with the Office of Congressman Emanuel Cleaver, II).

This concern is not unique to the Kansas City metropolitan area and has been expressed by communities around the nation. In testimony before the U.S. Senate last month, the Chair of the Connect New Mexico Council, Kimball Sekaquaptewa, noted “In New Mexico, we estimate that the Fabric is missing tens of thousands of eligible serviceable locations, losing up to \$500M in the funding allocation... we ask that NTIA extend the January 13, 2023 deadline to submit challenges to the FCC’s preliminary broadband map.”⁴ On December 22 of last year, a bipartisan group of Senators, led by Senate Commerce Committee Chairwoman Maria Cantwell and Ranking Member Roger Wicker noted “significant flaws” in the draft maps released by the FCC and requested additional time for state and local governments, Tribal nations, and consumers to provide input and challenge the maps.⁵ We agree that a 60 day extension is critical to ensuring that communities across the nation receive the appropriate share of need-based formula funding to close the digital divide.

In the Kansas City metropolitan area, broadband is instrumental in supporting economic development, enabling distance learning, allowing clinical services through telehealth, supporting the operations of our first responders, providing underserved constituents and communities with greater opportunity, among so many other important uses. Since March 2020, Congress has provided more than \$78 billion to address the digital divide and broadband availability. We are confident that we share the goals of the Administration in striving to gather the best possible data, distribute federal finding as equitably as possible, and to see all American communities have access to high quality broadband service. However, in the process of Congress and the Administration making a nation-changing investment in broadband, sacrificing accuracy for speed would undermine the important goals of our historic effort.

If the Administration finds it impossible to delay the timeline as it currently stands, we urge the FCC and NTIA to utilize all available means of communication, technical assistance, and administrative authority to ensure every community receives their fair share of BEAD funding in this complex process. This includes sharing additional documentation submitted by broadband providers to assess the extent to which a provider may be inflating services. We appreciate your attention to this important matter and look forward to continued partnership in ensuring that every American has access to reliable high-speed internet.

Sincerely,



Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress

⁴ Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Technology, [Testimony of Kimball Sekaquaptewa](#) (December 13, 2022).

⁵ Members of the United States Senate, [Letter to the FCC and NTIA](#) (December 22, 2022).