

October 9, 2019

The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai,

While I am encouraged to hear that your agency is planning to implement a formal public feedback mechanism to improve broadband coverage maps, the people of West Virginia need help now. Until a more viable process is established, I will be providing you with real coverage data from people on the ground in West Virginia and a brief description of the challenges they face personally, professionally, and economically as a result of their unreliable broadband service.

I have received correspondence from a constituent in Berkeley Springs, West Virginia in the state's Eastern Panhandle. The local mineral springs has been drawing visitors to the area since the mid-1800s and the area remains a popular tourist destination today. Both Cacapon State Park Resort and Coolfont Resort are significant economic drivers for the area. The state park, a popular spot for fishing, hiking, and camping, is also undergoing an expansion right now, which will transform the area and provide an opportunity to bring more visitors to the park. While some of these visitors appreciate the chance to unplug, that does not necessarily mean they want to be completely disconnected. For West Virginia to continue to develop its tourism industry in places like Berkeley Springs, broadband access is critical.

The lack of broadband access is having devastating impacts on the tourism industry in my state, one of our largest economic drivers. Ironically, the same things that attract people to live and work in my beautiful state – our tall mountains, lush forests, rolling hills and roaring rapids – make broadband deployment astronomically expensive.

Using the Ookla Speed Testing Application on a Dell Laptop PC to test their fixed broadband service from AT&T Mobile Broadband Service, my office received the following speed results from Berkeley Springs:

- 1.74mbps down / 9.23mbps up

These numbers are well below your agency's definition of broadband and the advertised speed they were given by their provider. I hope you will use this data to validate the information West Virginia's broadband providers have submitted to the FCC and ensure that they are eligible for any and all relevant broadband grants and other resources. Places like Berkeley Springs depend on the promise of universal service, and it is our job to make good on that promise.

Sincerely,

Joe Manchin III
United States Senator