



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

December 19, 2018

The Honorable Joe Manchin
United States Senate
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Manchin:

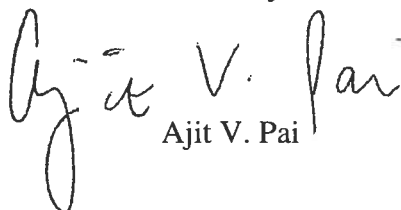
Thank you for your sharing your concerns regarding the Mobility Fund Phase II Reverse Auction. As you know, bringing broadband to rural parts of America is one of my top priorities and the Commission has dedicated a great deal of resources to accomplishing those goals.

As you have noted in the past, the auction can only work if we know where mobile broadband already is, and just as importantly, where it is not. Otherwise we risk allocating limited Universal Services funding to overbuilding some areas while missing important coverage gaps. That is why I recently took action to investigate one or more large carriers that may have violated the MF-II reverse auction rules and overstated what areas they cover. We will conduct a thorough, yet expeditious investigation of these carriers so that we can ensure the map is correct. The investigation will ensure that unserved areas of the country are not unfairly excluded from the auction.

To further ensure support goes where it is most needed, we have adopted a framework for the reverse auction that specifically includes a terrain factor to account for the fact that topography is a significant driver of deployment costs in rural areas. I have publicly committed to ensuring a terrain factor is included because it is essential to ensure that places like West Virginia that are well known for challenging and rugged terrain will receive additional support. This way, we will ensure that the auction will not prioritize less expensive networks serving flatter terrain and will level the playing field for all bidders.

I appreciate your continued commitment to ensuring that rural Americans can have access to modern broadband networks. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,


Ajit V. Pai