

June 1, 2021

The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel  
Acting Chair  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Rosenworcel,

In 2015 when the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) broadband coverage maps incorrectly indicated that 99.9% of Americans had wireless coverage, I invited then-Chair Tom Wheeler to West Virginia to see for himself just how bad coverage was on the ground. After six years, one formal challenge process, and over 2,400 speed tests from West Virginians, I am heartened to see the FCC under your leadership finally waking up and working actively to fix the maps through the newly minted Broadband Data Task Force. I commend you on your immediate actions and progress to date in moving forward on such a massively complex task.

As you continue to work toward establishing a user-friendly process for people to submit this data directly to the FCC, I will continue to encourage West Virginians to remain an active part of the process and submit speed test data to my office which I will share with you and the Broadband Data Task Force to help inform your decision-making. West Virginians have proven that they can and they will gather the information we need to get these maps right. Attached you will find the next batch of 309 speed tests from across the Mountain State.

I've said many times that West Virginians can't even get 1G, much less than 5G, in many parts of the state. Even our cities have poor service relative to the rest of the country. Charleston, West Virginia's capital and largest city, was recently found to have by far the slowest speeds of any metropolitan area in the country. In order to receive help, we need accurate data to show where federal funding needs to be targeted to ensure that everyone has access to reliable, affordable broadband. It is irresponsible for us to be sending out money for broadband without fixing the maps first, which is why I repeatedly asked then-Chairman Ajit Pai to postpone the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) to fix the maps before spending as much as \$20 billion incorrectly. Unfortunately, he failed to heed my warning, arguing that we didn't need updated maps because the FCC knew with certainty the areas that were currently unserved. Sadly, what was billed as the single biggest step yet to close the digital divide, is looking more and more like a misstep.

Last week, the Competitive Carriers Association (CCA) released a report that found "pervasive errors" in the FCC's data which could result extremely wealthy, urban, and obviously served areas, including Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco, MIT's campus in Cambridge, and Apple's headquarters in Cupertino, receiving subsidies through RDOF. This is all while so many areas in my state aren't even eligible to apply for this funding because of the inaccurate maps. No state has been penalized by poor maps more than West Virginia. In fact, BroadbandNow released a report last week estimating that West Virginia has the highest error rate in

FCC over-reporting in the country at 35.89%. This means that nearly 600,000 West Virginians – who still don't have adequate service – were ineligible to even apply for assistance through RDOF.

That's not a surprise. I have been sounding the alarm on this three-alarm fire for years. That's why, in 2018, I became the only member of Congress to formally participate in the FCC's Mobility Fund Phase II (MF-II) Challenge Process, which proved that several mobile service providers' maps were wrong. That's why, last year, I worked with my colleagues to help pass the Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technological (Broadband DATA) Act, which included provisions from my bill, the Map Improvement Act. And it's why I've worked with thousands of West Virginians to submit their speed tests to the FCC to help improve these maps. As long as we allow broadband companies to draw these maps behind closed doors, they will never be right.

I know you are committed to fixing these maps as much as I am. We traveled to the state together in 2019, visiting Romney and Weston and talking with the families, students, and businesses that are stuck on the wrong side of the digital divide. You've seen firsthand where these gaps exist, and how it impacts the lives of West Virginians every day. You understand that this fight isn't just about better connectivity, it's about being able to compete on a level playing field, it's about being able to grow a strong economy and create economic opportunity in areas that have lost so much of it.

Thank you for the important work you are undertaking at the FCC. I look forward to continuing to work with you on incorporating my constituents' speed test data into the mapping process to make them more accurate and more reflective of the actual service available on the ground.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Manchin III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator