

United States Senate

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August 14, 2019

COMMITTEES
APPROPRIATIONS
ARMED SERVICES
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

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 received correspondence from Masontown, West Virginia in the northeastern part of the state and only a short drive away from iconic Cooper's Rock State Park. While this area is known for its natural beauty, many working people, including healthcare workers, also call Masontown home. Fixed broadband access is especially necessary for those in the healthcare field, who need to preserve patient safety and comply with HIPAA regulations. If fixed broadband is unavailable and unreliable, the safety and security of residents' private information may be vulnerable.

West Virginia is a wonderful place to live with vibrant, caring communities that value connection. However, the lack of broadband access is having devastating impacts on residents' ability to work, learn, and connect in my state. 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 an iPhone XS to test their fixed broadband service from Frontier Communications, my office received the following speed results from Masontown:

- 0.0mbps down/ 0.0mbps up
- 6.88mbps down / 0.0mbps 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 Masontown 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