

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2201

June 15, 2021

The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel
Acting Chairwoman
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street NE
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Acting Chairwoman Rosenworcel:

This past March, I introduced new legislation, H.R.1610 - Rural Broadband Window of Opportunity Act, to require the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to prioritize the processing of Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) applications located in areas with shorter build seasons. I write today to advocate for the intent of this bill and other matters to ensure efficiency in rural and remote broadband buildouts.

The digital divide is a significant problem in our country, with too many American households still lacking access to a reliable internet connection. RDOF funds need to flow to providers with shovel-ready projects as soon as possible; however, timeliness is key for certain proposed RDOF-funded projects moreso than others. As the FCC reviews RDOF long form applications for final approval, there is a strong need for the Commission to swiftly consider those projects which may be limited by a small seasonal timeframe to build new broadband infrastructure. For example, as we move into warmer spring and summer months, there are many RDOF participants in Northern regions waiting for RDOF approval yet feel the pressure to begin fulfilling their obligations before ice and snow make new construction nearly impossible. For this reason, I urge the FCC to move quickly on these RDOF applications in highly seasonal regions, taking into account the time limitations each provider has to execute a buildout.

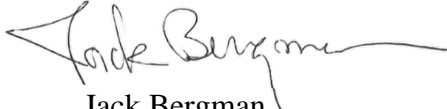
Additionally, it is my understanding the FCC may not approve every long form application it is currently reviewing given the RDOF program requirements. For each failed application, there will be a large group of census blocks that remain unserved or underserved. I have heard concerns these census blocks will be neglected, left ineligible to other federal and state broadband infrastructure programs due to lapsed RDOF eligibility. The FCC must quickly take action to redesignate any such census blocks from a failed long form application so opportunities for near-term buildouts are not lost through other sources of funds, such as Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds or the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) Broadband Infrastructure Program.

If the FCC does not have the regulatory authority to accomplish either of these, I request the FCC to provide me with an explanation of what authorities Congress would need to legislate in



order to achieve these goals. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or my staff should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Jack Bergman
Member of Congress