

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 18, 2020

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

Dear Chairman Pai,

We write to encourage the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to utilize, to the extent possible, recently completed location-level broadband maps for the state of Georgia.

Since becoming FCC Chairman in January 2017, your top priority has rightfully been to close the urban-rural digital divide. The COVID-19 pandemic has served only to exacerbate this divide, as critical services like telemedicine, teleworking and virtual classrooms have been out of reach for far too many households, but especially, rural ones. While the FCC's numerous efforts to promote rural broadband are encouraging, the digital divide cannot be closed until the Commission has access to better data and maps.

The FCC has acknowledged that inaccuracies in its Fixed Broadband Deployment Map may cause broadband deployment to be overstated, leaving locations, oftentimes in rural areas, unserved. These maps are inadequate because their foundation is based on census blocks. If one premise in a census block can be served by an Internet access provider, that provider will report on its Form 477 that the entire census block is served. In rural areas where census blocks can be very large tracts of land, this can leave many premises indicated as served, while actually being unserved. While the FCC has taken steps to address broadband mapping issues in its forthcoming Digital Opportunity Data Collection, it may be several years before a more accurate and granular national broadband map is realized.

In the interim, the state of Georgia has taken the initiative to develop its own broadband maps, becoming the first state in the nation to utilize an enhanced location-level methodology to map broadband access with a high degree of precision. These maps shed light on a truly distressing reality. Currently, more than a million Georgians lack access to reliable high-speed internet service. Furthermore, of the more than 507,000 homes and businesses lacking access to reliable broadband service at speeds of 25/3 mpbs, nearly 70% of these locations are in rural parts of Georgia. What's even more eye-opening, though, is the stark differences between Georgia and the FCC's broadband maps. The initiative pinpointed over 250,000 locations that FCC maps inaccurately claim have broadband access. This is unacceptable and has far-reaching implications.

When federal support for broadband investment is based on incorrect mapping data, many eligible communities are unfairly shut out of the process from the start. There are billions of dollars that lay in the balance for key universal service funding, including the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund and the recently proposed 5G Fund for Rural America. As such, we implore

you to work with the State of Georgia to utilize its mapping data as soon as possible to ensure that Georgia's unserved communities are not preempted from benefiting from these critical initiatives.

We look forward to your prompt and thorough response, as well as any actions you plan to take.

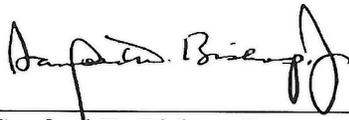
Sincerely,



David A. Perdue  
United States Senator



Kelly Loeffler  
United States Senator



Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Tom Graves  
Member of Congress



Rob Woodall  
Member of Congress



Austin Scott  
Member of Congress



Doug Collins  
Member of Congress



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter  
Member of Congress



Rick W. Allen  
Member of Congress



Barry Loudermilk  
Member of Congress



Jody Hice  
Member of Congress



A. Drew Ferguson, IV  
Member of Congress