

Broadband Timeline

October 11, 2016: In 2015, the Federal Communications Commission's broadband coverage maps indicated that 99.9% of Americans had wireless coverage. In order to prove these figures were inaccurate, Senator Manchin brings then-Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chairman Tom Wheeler to West Virginia to see first-hand why his agency was wrong.

February 16, 2017: Senator Manchin and Senator Wicker meet with Chairman Pai to discuss the importance of a robust, reliable, and standardized data collection and challenge process.

April 12, 2017: Senator Manchin and Senator Wicker sent a letter to Chairman Pai applauding the creation of the Rural Broadband Auctions Task Force and urging the FCC to ensure that accurate maps guide the upcoming auctions.

May 11, 2017: Senator Manchin and Senator Wicker introduce the Rural Wireless Access Act which would require the FCC to collect wireless broadband coverage data that is valid, consistent, and robust.

August 3, 2017: FCC votes on Mobility Fund Order to begin the process of providing \$4.53 billion over ten years to expand mobile broadband deployment.

February 27, 2018: FCC releases their Initial Eligible Areas Map for Mobility Fund Phase II.

March 29, 2018: Senator Manchin sends a letter to Chairman Pai encouraging the FCC to work with state and local governments on the Mobility Fund II Map Challenge Process to ensure the map reflects the actual real world experience of West Virginians.

April 10, 2018: The FCC responds to Senator Manchin's request that they provide support to state and local governments by releasing a new map that shows areas where challenges have the best likelihood of success.

May 10, 2018: Senator Manchin requests a waiver from the FCC to participate in the Mobility Fund Phase II Challenge Process and prove their coverage map was inaccurate

May 18, 2018: Senator Manchin hosts the FCC Wireless Telecommunications Bureau's Associate Chief of Competition and Infrastructure Policy Division, Michael Janson for an FCC Mobility Fund II Challenge Process presentation in West Virginia to help stakeholders better understand the challenge process and the opportunities they have to improve the accuracy of the eligibility map.

May 25, 2018: Senator Manchin receives waiver from the FCC to participate in the Mobility Fund Phase II Challenge Process.

June 5, 2018: Senator Manchin hosts a Facebook Live with FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel and Aaron Cox, Chairman of the Hampshire County Broadband Initiative Council to discuss broadband access in West Virginia, Mobility Fund II and how West Virginians could challenge the FCC's map.
November 26, 2018: Senator Manchin becomes only Member of Congress to formally challenge a federal broadband coverage map when he submitted a successful challenge to the Mobility Fund Phase II Initial Eligible Areas Map.

February 12, 2019: Senator Manchin announces that West Virginia will be included in the new National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) initiative that will help make sure the national broadband availability map is accurate. This came after he led the effort to secure the language the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 that authorized this pilot program.

February 14, 2019: Senator Manchin leads a bipartisan letter to the FCC Chairman Ajit Pai urging him to create a public feedback mechanism to allow consumers and states an opportunity to participate in the mapping process.

May 15, 2019: Senator Manchin introduces the Map Improvement Act of 2019 (S. 1485).

July 18, 2019: Senator Manchin sends Chairman Pai the results of speed tests his staff took in Cabins, WV that showed internet speeds were well below the FCC's definition of broadband and the advertised speed they were given by their provider. Senator Manchin also promised to continue sending results from West Virginians until the FCC establishes a user-friendly public feedback mechanism to allow West Virginians to help validate the FCC's coverage data.

August 14, 2019: Senator Manchin sends Chairman Pai the results of eight speed tests taken by West Virginians. October 10, 2019: Senator Manchin sends Chairman Pai the results of fourteen speed tests taken by West Virginians.

October 18, 2019: Senator Manchin hosts Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel in West Virginia to discuss broadband coverage in the state and the importance of creating accurate coverage maps for rural states. During their visit, Senator Manchin and Commissioner Rosenworcel hosted town halls on broadband connectivity in Romney and with Lewis County High School students and community leaders, and a roundtable at the Stonewell Jackson Hospital in Weston.

November 12, 2019: Senator Manchin sends his 100th speed test letter to Chairman Pai. To date, one hundred and six speed test results have been sent to the FCC.

November 15, 2019: Senator Manchin attends a West Virginia Broadcasters Association Meeting with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chairman Ajit Pai. This meeting provided the opportunity for Senator Manchin and Chairman Pai to discuss the need for reliable broadband access, and highlight the importance of conducting speed tests in order to create accurate coverage maps that determine how much federal broadband funding West Virginia receives.

December 11, 2019: Senator Manchin, as the Ranking Member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, secures language in the Secure Rural Schools program to ensure that funding can be used to address the “homework gap” so students have the ability to access the internet once they leave school—whether on a school bus, at a library, or at home.

December 12, 2019: the Senate passes Senator Manchin’s proposals to fix the country’s inaccurate broadband maps through the Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technology Act (the “Broadband DATA Act”). The bill was signed by President Trump on March 23, 2020.

January 9, 2020: Senator Manchin leads a bi-partisan letter to FCC Chairman, Ajit Pai urging the FCC to focus their efforts on providing reliable broadband to rural communities before expanding 5G coverage, as indicated by the announcement of the FCC’s 5G Fund to replace the Mobility Fund Phase II program.

January 20, 2020: Senator Manchin announces an \$18.7 million broadband award for Harrison, Doddridge, Lewis, Barbour, and Upshur counties as part of USDAs ReConnect program. The investment will support a high-speed broadband

infrastructure project that will create or improve rural broadband for more than 6,300 rural households and approximately 383 farms.

February 4, 2020: Senator Manchin announces a \$3 million broadband award for Hampshire County and Hardy Telecommunications through the USDAs Community Connect program to help connect an additional 600 homes, businesses, and farms.

February 10, 2020: Senator Manchin announces the launch of his new webpage where constituents can easily submit internet speed tests to the Senator. Speed test results submitted on the new webpage will be sent to Ajit Pai, Chairman of the FCC, to highlight incorrect broadband coverage maps of West Virginia and support the need for the formation of a public feedback system to better assess broadband coverage across rural states like West Virginia.

February 14, 2020: Senator Manchin passes language in the Senate Appropriators Committee urging them to keep Mobility Fund Phase II high cost set aside language in final spending bill. His language was maintained in the final bill and was signed into law the next day.

March 25, 2020: The Senate passes the third COVID-19 emergency funding package, the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act)*, providing \$50 million to expand digital network access in areas of the country where such access is lacking, including the purchase of internet-enable devices such as “hotspots” which Senator Manchin fought to explicitly authorize to allow individuals in rural areas to remain connected during this time. It also provided \$25 million for the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program within the U.S. Department of Agriculture and another \$100 million for the ReConnect program to promote the deployment of broadband throughout rural America.

May 7, 2020: Senator Manchin introduces a bipartisan bill the Eliminating Barriers to Rural Internet Development Grant Eligibility (E-BRIDGE) Act, which would remove obstacles for broadband projects to receive Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants. Specifically, the legislation ensures that local communities can partner with the private sector and gives communities more flexibility in complying with their funding match requirements.

May 13, 2020: Senator Manchin announces the FCC’s approval of Wirt County Health Services Association/Coplin Health System’s application for \$274,432 to provide telehealth services to West Virginians during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a member of the Financial Services & General Government (FSGG)

Appropriations Subcommittee, which oversees the FCC's budget, Senator Manchin helped support \$200 million in funding for the telehealth pilot program through the CARES Act.

May 14, 2020: Senator Manchin launches a collaboration with Lewis County High School and FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel to encourage Lewis County High School students to submit broadband speed tests while they are learning from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. Senator Manchin will send these speed tests to FCC Chairman Ajit Pai to advocate for the FCC to create a public feedback system and fix their broadband coverage maps, which determine where federal funding goes to expand broadband coverage.

May 20, 2020: Senator Manchin announces the FCC's approval of Lincoln County Primary Care Center's application for \$967,304 to procure telehealth carts, network hardware and software upgrades, and diagnostic equipment to provide telehealth services to West Virginians at 18 rural sites during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a member of the Financial Services & General Government (FSGG) Appropriations Subcommittee, which oversees the FCC's budget, Senator Manchin helped support \$200 million in funding for the telehealth pilot program through the CARES Act.

June 16, 2020: Senator Manchin questions FCC Chairman Ajit Pai on how much funding the FCC would need to fix the current broadband coverage maps, and the distribution of funding to expand broadband access during a Senate Appropriations Financial Services and General Government (FSGG) Subcommittee Hearing.

June 17, 2020: Senator Manchin applauds FCC approval of West Virginia University Health Center's application of \$780,899 for their Telehealth Program.

June 19, 2020: Senator Manchin announced \$99,999 for Shepherd University through the National Science Foundation (NSF). This funding will support bringing fiber optic connectivity to Shepherd University's campus, and improve overall access to the internet for students, staff, and faculty.

June 24, 2020: Senator Manchin applauds FCC approval of Mon Health Medical Center's application of \$283,396 for their Telehealth Program.

June 25, 2020: Senator Manchin submits over 1,000 speed tests to FCC. We have set a new goal of 2,000 by the end of the year.

July 8, 2020: Senator Manchin, along with Senator Collins, will introduce Hotspots and Online Technology and Services Procurement for our Tribes and States (HOTSPOTS) Act during the next Senate session. The HOTSPOTS Act would create a 2-year, \$160 million hotspot pilot program with a minimum allotment of \$1.6 million per State to allow States, Tribes, and Territories to purchase and distribute internet-connected devices to libraries in low-income and rural areas.

July 8, 2020: Senator Manchin applauds FCC approval of Charleston Area Medical Center's application of \$781,964 for their Telehealth Program.

August 6, 2020: Senator Manchin, along with Senator Cornyn, introduced the bipartisan Accelerating Connected Care and Education Support Services on the Internet (ACCESS the Internet) Act to expand reliable broadband access for education and telehealth appointments for rural American during the COVID-10 pandemic. The ACCESS the Internet Act provides funding for the Education Stabilization Fund, hotspots through libraries, and telehealth services through the FCC and VA.

October 1, 2020: Senator Manchin, along with Senator Cornyn, introduced the Eliminate the Digital Divide Act which would create a \$10 billion fund to help rural states to expand broadband access in unserved areas.

October 5, 2020: FCC Chairman Ajit Pai announced the FCC would implement the Broadband DATA Act, which requires the FCC to update their broadband coverage maps to accurately represent unserved areas, before the \$9 billion 5G Fund for Rural America is distributed.

October 16, 2020: Submitted over 2,000 speed tests to the FCC.

October 19, 2020: USDA awarded over \$7.6 million to invest in the build out of broadband infrastructure in Barbour, Doddridge, and Randolph counties.

December 1, 2020: Bicameral, bipartisan coalition of members introduced COVID-19 emergency relief framework that included \$10 billion for broadband infrastructure.

December 7, 2020: The FCC Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) Phase I Auction is announced, promising \$362.1 million in funding to expand broadband access at nearly 120,000 locations across West Virginia.

December 21, 2020: As a result of Senator Manchin's bipartisan work, Congress passes an end-of-year coronavirus relief package, including \$7 billion to close the digital divide. This funding includes \$250 million for another round of the FCC's COVID-19 Telehealth Program, \$3.2 billion for the Emergency Broadband Benefit program to help subsidize Internet connectivity during the pandemic, and \$300 million for broadband infrastructure deployment in rural areas. Perhaps most importantly, the bill also includes \$98 million for the FCC to move forward with implementation of the Broadband DATA Act.

January 27, 2021: Senator Manchin leads a bipartisan group of Senators in a letter calling on the FCC to ensure small rural providers receive a fair share of the COVID-19 Telehealth Program funding authorized in the recent year-end stimulus package.

March 4, 2021: Senator Manchin leads a bipartisan group of Senators calling on the Biden Administration to update federal standards for high-speed broadband to reflect modern uses and align those standards across the federal government. The letter also urges the Administration to align the definition of what constitutes high-speed broadband across federal agencies to replace the patchwork of standards that exist today.

March 11, 2021: Congress passes the American Rescue Plan, which includes roughly \$17 billion in funding for broadband and connectivity across the bill. This includes \$10 billion for critical capital projects for broadband infrastructure, including \$138 million for West Virginia, based on a formula Senator Manchin authored in the December negotiations to benefit rural states that need the most help. Senator Manchin was also instrumental in allowing counties and municipalities to use their Fiscal Recovery Funds for broadband infrastructure. The bill also includes portions of Senator Manchin's ACCESS the Internet Act and his HOTSPOTS Act, including \$200 million to allow libraries to purchase hotspots and other devices to address rural connectivity issues. The bill also includes roughly \$7.2 billion for the expansion of E-Rate through an Emergency Connectivity Fund to furnish schools and libraries with connected devices and hotspots for internet use at home, including Senator Manchin's language prioritizing funds to areas that need them the most like WV.

February 17, 2021: After years of urging from Senator Manchin, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced the establishment of a task force

to fix the FCC's incorrect broadband coverage maps that determine eligibility for federal funds that help expand broadband access.

April 19, 2021: Senator Manchin led 13 Senators in requesting information from the CEOs of Verizon, T-Mobile and AT&T on their companies' plans to transition away from 2G or 3G services beginning in 2022.

May 13, 2021: [Senator Manchin announced](#) that applications are open for the \$3.2 billion Emergency Broadband Benefit Program.

May 19, 2021: [Senator Manchin reintroduced](#) the Eliminating Barriers to Rural Internet Development Grant Eligibility (E-BRIDGE) Act, legislation that would remove obstacles for broadband projects to receive Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants.

June 2, 2021: [Senator Manchin submitted](#) another group of speed tests from West Virginians to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to assist in efforts to quickly update the broadband coverage maps that dictate federal funding for broadband deployment for West Virginians and Americans without coverage.

June 8, 2021: [Senator Manchin announced](#) that since applications opened three weeks ago, 27,149 West Virginians have been enrolled in the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program.

June 29, 2021: [Senator Manchin announced](#) that applications are open for the \$7.17 billion Emergency Connectivity Fund, which was authorized in the American Rescue Plan.

August 10, 2021: [Senator Manchin highlighted](#) the new FCC broadband coverage maps show West Virginia's lack of broadband coverage and the need to fix the incorrect coverage maps.

August 10, 2021: [Senate passes Senator Manchin's](#) bipartisan infrastructure bill that includes \$65 billion for broadband expansion through updated coverage maps, high cost set asides, prioritizing unserved areas and ensuring affordability.

August 25, 2021: [Senator Manchin announced](#) that West Virginia schools and libraries can expect to receive \$48,189,817 to purchase laptops and tablets, Wi-Fi hotspots, modems, routers and broadband connections for students, staff and library visitors, pending final review of the applications by the FCC.

September 24, 2021: [Senator Manchin announced](#) that the first round of the Emergency Connectivity Fund, which helps schools and libraries purchase laptops and tablets, Wi-Fi hotspots, modems, routers and broadband connections for students, staff and library visitors.

October 7, 2021: [Senator Manchin announced](#) that West Virginia broadband service provider Citynet will receive \$53,513,114 over the next decade from the first round of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) to expand broadband access across West Virginia.

October 13, 2021: [Senator Manchin announced](#) \$12,760,030 from the American Rescue Plan for 19 West Virginia schools and libraries as part of the second round of the Emergency Connectivity Fund.

October 22, 2021: [Senator Manchin announced](#) \$457,000 from the Federal Communication Commission's Telehealth Program at Minnie Hamilton Health System to purchase equipment and software to improve internet access, voice service, network capacity and the quality of telehealth communications.

November 10, 2021: [Senator Manchin announced](#) another \$16,072,811 from the *American Rescue Plan* for 13 West Virginia schools, school districts, libraries, and other education organizations as part of the third and fourth rounds of the Emergency Connectivity Fund.

November 16, 2021: [Senator Manchin announced](#) \$406,896 from the Federal Communication Commission's Telehealth Program at FamilyCare Health Center in Scott Depot, West Virginia to purchase laptops and video conferencing software, as well as improve the network and network security to provide high quality medical services to West Virginians.

November 18, 2021: [Senator Manchin announced](#) West Virginia service provider Prodigy will receive \$8,583,001 over the next decade from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) through the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) to expand broadband across West Virginia. Prodigy is expected to provide broadband service to 4,771 locations across the Mountain State.

December 9, 2021: [Senator Manchin questioned](#) Kurt DelBene, nominee for Assistant for Information and Technology of the U.S. Department of Veterans

Affairs (VA) on ensuring Veterans have access to telehealth, including audio-only telehealth options.

December 20, 2021: [West Virginia received](#) an additional \$2.8 million through round six of the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) Emergency Connectivity Fund. This funding supports virtual learning, homework and library services for West Virginia schools and libraries.

December 23, 2021: [Senate Manchin announced](#) \$960,444 for the Ritchie County Primary Care Association in Harrisville, WV through Round 2 of the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) COVID-19 Telehealth Program. This funding will support the purchase of telehealth kiosks and software to assist COVID-19 screening and primary medical care for vulnerable, low-income, and elderly patients with chronic conditions.

January 12, 2022: [Senator Manchin announced](#) \$561,367 from the *American Rescue Plan* for three West Virginia schools, school districts, libraries, and other education organizations through the Emergency Connectivity Fund.

January 27, 2022: [Senator Manchin announced](#) an additional \$400,947 from the *American Rescue Plan* for two West Virginia schools, school districts, libraries, and other education organizations through the Emergency Connectivity Fund. This new announcement makes \$37,324,739 for West Virginia schools, school districts, libraries and other education organizations from the Emergency Connectivity Fund.

February 2, 2022: During a Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations subcommittee hearing, [Senator Manchin questioned](#) Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo on the implementation of the historic broadband funding through the bipartisan *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)*. Senator Manchin reconfirmed Congress's intent that unserved areas must get connectivity before money is spent elsewhere, including the 10% set-aside for traditionally high-cost areas.

February 8, 2022: [Senator Manchin announced](#) \$899,990 from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) COVID-19 Telehealth Program to four West Virginia healthcare providers to expand telehealth services. The funding will be used to purchase laptops and video conferencing software, improve network security and expand telehealth services to aid in addressing mental healthcare needs exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

February 15, 2022: [Senator Manchin led](#) 16 bipartisan Senators in encouraging the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Assistant Secretary Alan Davidson to follow Congressional intent in implementing the \$65 billion included in the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) for broadband expansion efforts across the United States.

February 28, 2022: [Senator Manchin announced](#) \$19.7 million from the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to expand broadband services in West Virginia. The funding will support Logan and Mingo counties' Fiber to the Premises project, which enables last-mile broadband access and will serve more than 12,000 West Virginian households.

March 1, 2022: [Senator Manchin announced](#) an additional \$2,431,022 from the *American Rescue Plan* for West Virginia schools, school districts, libraries and other education organizations as part of the latest round of the Emergency Connectivity Fund. This funding is distributed through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to help schools and libraries purchase laptops and tablets, Wi-Fi hotspots, modems, routers and broadband connections for students, staff and library visitors.

March 10, 2022: [Senator Manchin announced](#) that West Virginia will receive \$247.6 million over the next decade from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) to expand broadband access to 79,391 locations across West Virginia.

March 25, 2022: [Senator Manchin announced](#) that Regional Optical Communications (ROC) in Princeton, West Virginia, will receive a \$300,000 grant through the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) for the West Virginia Multi-Region Broadband Projects (Mbps) Accelerator Project. In addition to ARC funds, the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) is contributing \$1.2 million to the project, bringing total project funding to \$1.5 million.

May 17, 2022: [Senator Manchin announced](#) \$7,680,000 from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) through the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for two projects in West Virginia. One project will support the design of a statewide broadband implementation plan through Regional Optical Communications, a consortium of counties led by the Region 1 and 4 Planning and Development Councils, which is based in Princeton.

May 18, 2022: [Senator Manchin announced](#) that West Virginia will receive \$5 million from the bipartisan *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)* to outline the state's plan to expand broadband with the estimated \$600 million West Virginia will receive to provide broadband access to every unserved area in the state.

June 7, 2022: [Senator Manchin announced](#) that \$136.3 million from the *American Rescue Plan* Capital Projects Fund has been approved to expand reliable, high-speed broadband access across West Virginia. These funds will be matched with \$90 million from West Virginia's State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds and an additional \$10 million from the state's revenue.

June 16, 2022: [Senator Manchin announced](#) an additional \$5,012,488 from the *American Rescue Plan* for the Harrison County School District and the Community Action of Southeastern West Virginia Head Start Program as part of the latest rounds of the Emergency Connectivity Fund. This funding is distributed through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to support connecting West Virginia students, schools and libraries to reliable broadband.

July 7, 2022: [Senator Manchin announced](#) an additional \$892,380 from the *American Rescue Plan* for six West Virginia school districts as part of the latest round of the FCC's Emergency Connectivity Fund. This funding helps schools, libraries and educational organizations purchase laptops and tablets, Wi-Fi hotspots, modems, routers and broadband connections for students, staff and library visitors.

July 20, 2022: [Senator Manchin applauded](#) the FCC's newly proposed standard for broadband connections as 100 megabits per second (Mbps) download or faster. The proposed change will improve Internet connectivity for families across West Virginia and the United States, particularly in rural communities.

September 1, 2022: [Senator Manchin announced](#) that GigaBeam's bids through the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) have been authorized, awarding \$27,972,938 to the company to further connect West Virginia with high-speed broadband.

September 15, 2022: [Senator Manchin announced](#) \$1,681,161 from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) Coal Communities Commitment Program for

the Woodlands Development Group in Elkins, West Virginia. The funding will support broadband expansion in Randolph and Tucker counties.

October 5, 2022: [Senator Manchin announced](#) \$728,065 from the bipartisan *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)* for the development of a statewide digital equity plan in West Virginia.

October 17, 2022: [Senator Manchin announced](#) \$14,716,938 from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), including \$2,400,000 for broadband expansion in Summers County and \$1,692,507 for broadband expansion in Boone County.