

May 26, 2023

The Honorable Gina Raimondo
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Raimondo,

I write to you today concerned about my state's access to high-quality broadband service and to reiterate the importance of broadband deployment programs at the Department of Commerce.

A recent broadband quality study found Kansas is the state ranked last in terms of average download speed, and ranks only modestly better in other key broadband quality metrics, including latency.¹ Other recent data, collected by the University of Kansas in a study funded by the Economic Development Administration, found that up to 1 million Kansans live in areas that lack high-speed broadband service (100 Mbps download / 20 Mbps upload).² Most often, Kansans without access to broadband or without access to high-quality broadband live in rural areas.

The benefits of access to high-quality broadband are clear and well known. Broadband access is correlated with more jobs and greater economic growth,³ better healthcare outcomes,⁴ and increased educational performance.⁵ This means many Kansans will be poorer, sicker, and less-educated than their peers that have access to high-quality broadband.

A lot of work has been done to improve broadband in Kansas, but it is clear there is plenty of work left to do.

¹ Neukam, Stephen. "These Are the Best (and Worst) US States for Broadband Access." The Hill, 11 May 2023, thehill.com/policy/technology/3988376-these-are-the-best-and-worst-us-states-for-broadband-access/.

² Ginther, Donna K., et al. "Broadband in Kansas: The Challenges of Digital Access and Affordability." KU ScholarWorks, 1 Mar. 2023, [kusolarworks.ku.edu/handle/1808/34031](https://scholarworks.ku.edu/handle/1808/34031).

³ Fritz, Jack, et al. "Broadband for all: charting a path to economic growth." Deloitte, April 2021, <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/consulting/articles/bridging-the-digital-divide-with-broadband-for-all.html>.

⁴ Turcios, Yosselin. "Digital Access: A Super Determinant of Health." SAMHSA, 22 Mar. 2023, www.samhsa.gov/blog/digital-access-super-determinant-health.

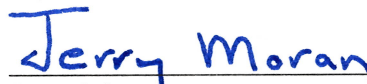
⁵ Bauer, Johannes M., et al. "Overcoming Michigan's Homework Gap: The Role of Broadband Internet Connectivity for Student Success and Career Outlooks." SSRN, 20 Oct. 2020, papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3714752.

During your recent visit to my state, you heard from local broadband providers and leaders in Kansas about their experience in getting their communities connected. Kansans told you about the challenges they faced and the opportunities created once broadband access was achieved in their area of the state. In return, you shared your desire to ensure each American has access to such service through programs Congress has authorized and funded at the Department of Commerce.

I want to make certain these programs are able to achieve this goal. In particular, I want to ensure the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program is able to connect unserved Kansans to high-quality broadband service. This can be done by making certain program funding allocations made to states are based on accurate data, project funding decisions are coordinated with other federal broadband deployment programs and do not subsidize the overbuilding of existing privately built networks, and maximizing broadband provider program participation by minimizing the regulatory burden associated with program participation. Collectively, these steps will help ensure the program avoids the missteps of prior broadband deployment programs and is successful in bridging the digital divide.

I hope you will consider me a partner in your efforts to bring high-quality broadband service to all Americans.

Sincerely,



Jerry Moran

United States Senator