

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-4706**

347

June 5, 2019

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

The Honorable Michael O'Rielly  
Commissioner, Federal Communications  
Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

The Honorable Brendan Carr  
Commissioner, Federal Communications  
Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel  
Commissioner, Federal Communications  
Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

The Honorable Geoffrey Starks  
Commissioner, Federal Communications  
Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Commissioners,

Washington, just like the Federal Communications Commission, has long been a leader in the effort to expand rural broadband connectivity, and we hope the Commission will consider our suggestions on this important topic. Given that broadband is critical to the way we live and work, the Governor of Washington's new "Broadband Office" is tasked with making broadband connectivity available in every corner of our state. We believe that by working together, the federal and state governments and private partners can ensure that residents throughout our state have greater access to educational, health and economic opportunities that broadband can enable.

First, we believe that having accurate data is critical to solving the rural broadband gap. Currently, the Commission's data suggest that 1.7 percent – or approximately 122,000 – of Washingtonians do not have access to broadband. Based on other available data and anecdotal evidence we have heard from our constituents, we believe the Commission's data may be overstating the availability of broadband. Microsoft, based in our home state, collected data that suggest 44.8 percent of Washingtonians are not using the internet at broadband speeds. Of course, access and usage are two different metrics, but a gap of more than 40 percentage points between those who have broadband available to them and those who choose to use that broadband suggests that the data deserve a second look.

We ask that the Commission consider incorporating its own subscription data as well as third party data to improve its broadband availability data and define policy outcomes. Using a variety of data points will

provide not only the Commission, but also other interested and invested stakeholders, a more complete, contextual understanding of broadband needs across the country.

We also believe that ensuring affordable access to TV white spaces technology (TVWS) is a critical component of bridging the rural broadband gap. Pilot programs for TVWS technology have already been deployed to great effect in Washington. For example, Microsoft and Native Network have entered into a commercial partnership that will use TVWS technology to build a network that will eventually reach tens of thousands of people within tribal communities in Washington and Montana.

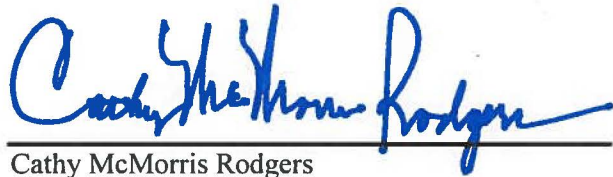
Unfortunately, TVWS technology is currently deployed on a relatively small scale in part because of the number of regulatory barriers that still stand in its way. We were encouraged by the Commission recently adopting final rules in two outstanding TVWS technology orders. To build on this momentum, we hope the Commission will issue a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to adopt technical rules that will advance the affordable deployment of TVWS in rural areas. This will enable greater use of TV white spaces spectrum and provide opportunities such as narrowband IoT scenarios such as precision agriculture.

We appreciate your attention to Washington's – and our nation's – rural broadband gap. As always, we welcome the chance to be of assistance to the Commission as you move forward on reforming broadband mapping methodologies and accelerating TVWS where it is needed the most. We are confident that together we can work toward achieving these goals.

Sincerely,



Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Member of Congress



Suzan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress



Denny Heck  
Member of Congress



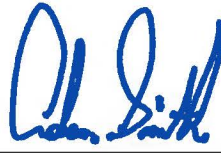
Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress



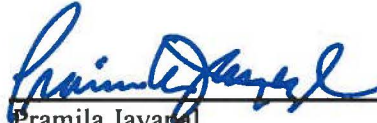
Kim Schrier  
Member of Congress



Adam Smith  
Member of Congress



Jaime Herrera Beutler  
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

August 21, 2019

The Honorable Kim Schrier  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1123 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Schrier:

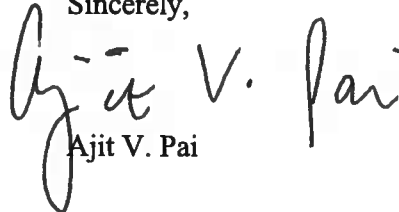
Thank you for your letter regarding Washingtonians' access to broadband. I share your view that high-speed Internet access is critical to economic opportunity, job creation, education, and civic engagement.

Additionally, I agree that maintaining updated and accurate broadband deployment data is critical to bridging the digital divide. We need to understand where broadband is available and where it is not in order to target our efforts and limited funding to areas that are most in need. This is why I proposed, and the Commission on August 1 adopted, a comprehensive update to the broadband mapping process. This Digital Opportunity Data Collection revamps the process in order to obtain more granular, more accurate data on broadband coverage. It also includes consideration of third-party data, as you suggest in your letter. It is my hope and expectation that this new approach will yield substantial benefits to the Commission, Congress, and the country as we advance policies designed to advance broadband connectivity.

I also agree with you that unlicensed spectrum in the TV white spaces presents an opportunity for better wireless broadband services, especially in rural areas of the country. To that end, the Commission issued a decision in March resolving a number of outstanding issues in this area and has sought public input on a petition from Microsoft suggesting further steps we can take to improve the use of this spectrum.

I appreciate your interest in these matters. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

  
Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

August 21, 2019

The Honorable Adam Smith  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2264 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Smith:

Thank you for your letter regarding Washingtonians' access to broadband. I share your view that high-speed Internet access is critical to economic opportunity, job creation, education, and civic engagement.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ajit" being the most prominent part.  
Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

August 21, 2019

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1314 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman McMorris Rodgers:

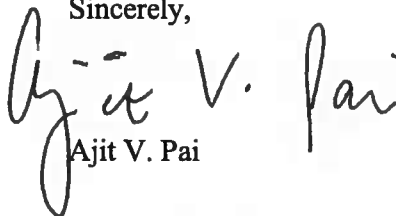
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
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OFFICE OF  
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August 21, 2019

The Honorable Dan Newhouse  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1318 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Newhouse:

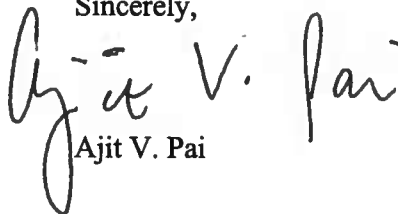
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WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

August 21, 2019

The Honorable Denny Heck  
U.S. House of Representatives  
425 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Heck:

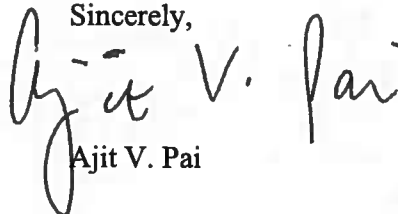
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

August 21, 2019

The Honorable Derek Kilmer  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1520 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Kilmer:

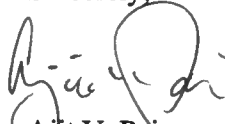
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Sincerely,

  
Ajit V. Pai

P.S. Congressman, thanks again for your letter. And on a personal note, please give my best to your wife! As she might have mentioned, she and I went to high school together in rural Kansas (where we were on the debate team, back in the glory days). Hope all's well!



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

August 21, 2019

The Honorable Jaime Herrera Beutler  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1107 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Herrera Beutler:

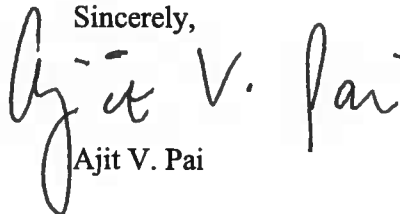
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OFFICE OF  
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August 21, 2019

The Honorable Pramila Jayapal  
U.S. House of Representatives  
319 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Jayapal:

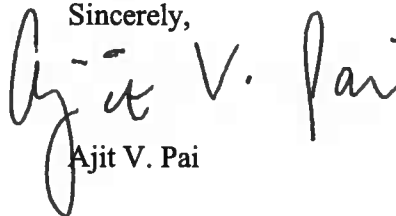
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
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August 21, 2019

The Honorable Rick Larsen  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2113 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Larsen:

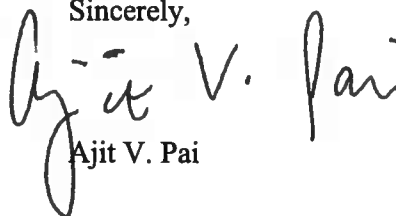
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
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August 21, 2019

The Honorable Suzan DelBene  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2442 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman DelBene:

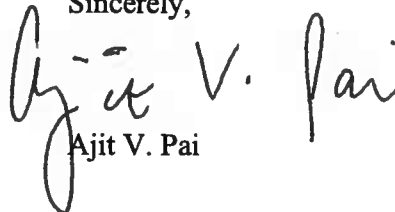
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