

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-2308

September 14, 2020

The Honorable Steven Mnuchin  
Secretary  
Department of Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania, NW  
Washington, DC 20220

Secretary Mnuchin,

We write to request the Treasury Department clarify that funds from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act are available for state, local, territorial and tribal governments for permanent broadband infrastructure.

The digital divide has long harmed our rural hospitals, schools, and small businesses and this problem has only become more apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic. While many in more urban and suburban communities transitioned to teleworking and telelearning, those in some rural communities are still struggling to catch up.

During this pandemic and the various stay-at-home orders, broadband disparity in our rural communities means students must locate and find transportation to local 'hotspots' in order to receive their education. It means our seniors and veterans are going without care as their internet connections are not strong enough to facilitate telemedicine.

The CARES Act allocated \$150 billion to state and local governments for COVID-19 response and for "necessary COVID-19 expenditures." The Treasury, however, has yet to include permanent broadband expansion in this definition. We believe it is necessary to give states and local governments flexibility to invest in broadband infrastructure to ensure that some rural communities are not further disadvantaged as teleworking, telelearning, and telehealth become more prevalent during this pandemic.

We request that the Treasury Department clarify that permanent broadband expansion is an eligible expense under the CARES Act to ensure rural America is not left behind during and after this unprecedented pandemic.

Thank you for your consideration.

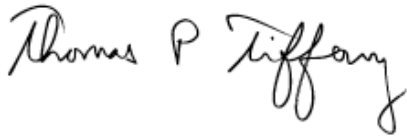
Sincerely,



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