

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 18, 2024

The Honorable Kamala D. Harris
Vice President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Vice President Harris:

We are writing to express serious concerns regarding your role as the Biden-Harris administration's "broadband czar" and the mismanagement of federal broadband initiatives under your leadership. It appears that your performance as "broadband czar" has mirrored your performance as "border czar," marked by poor management and a lack of effectiveness despite significant federal broadband investments and your promises to deliver broadband to rural areas.

As you are aware, Congress, through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, provided the National Telecommunications and Information Administration with \$42.45 billion for the Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program.¹ These funds are intended to provide broadband access to unserved communities, particularly those in rural areas.

In 2021, you were specifically tasked by President Biden to lead the administration's efforts to expand broadband services to unserved Americans.² And at the time, you stated, "we can bring broadband to rural America today."³ Despite your assurances over three years ago, rural and unserved communities continue to wait for the connectivity they were promised. Under your leadership, not a single person has been connected to the internet using the \$42.45 billion allocated for the BEAD program. Indeed, Politico recently reported on "the messy, delayed rollout of" this program.⁴

Instead of focusing on delivering broadband services to unserved areas, your administration has used the BEAD program to add partisan, extralegal requirements that were never envisioned by Congress and have obstructed broadband deployment. By imposing burdensome climate change mandates on infrastructure projects, prioritizing government-owned networks over private

¹ P.L. 117-58, (Nov. 15, 2021). <https://www.congress.gov/117/plaws/publ58/PLAW-117publ58.pdf>

² Remarks by President Biden in Address to a Joint Session of Congress (Apr. 28, 2021) (discussing the broadband infrastructure plan that later passed as BEAD in the IIJA and stating "THE PRESIDENT: . . . And I am asking the Vice President to lead this effort, if she would — THE VICE PRESIDENT: Of course. THE PRESIDENT: — because I know it will get done.") <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/04/29/remarks-by-president-biden-in-address-to-a-joint-session-of-congress/>; see also Margeurite Reardon, CNET, *President Biden Taps Kamala Harris to Lead Effort to Close Digital Divide* (Apr. 29, 2021). <https://www.cnet.com/home/internet/president-biden-taps-kamala-harris-to-lead-effort-to-close-digital-divide/>

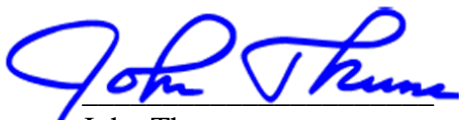
³ @VP X post. (Apr 27, 2021). <https://x.com/VP/status/1387126905288146947>

⁴ John Hendel, Politico, *'People Need to See it': How Politics Hung up a \$42B Biden Internet Buildout* (Sep. 4, 2024). <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/09/04/biden-broadband-program-swing-state-frustrations-00175845>


investment, mandating the use of unionized labor in states, and seeking to regulate broadband rates, your administration has caused unnecessary delays leaving millions of Americans unconnected.

The administration's lack of focus on truly connecting the unconnected has failed the American people and represents a gross misuse of limited taxpayer dollars. The American public deserves better.

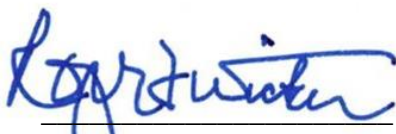
Sincerely,




John Thune
United States Senator



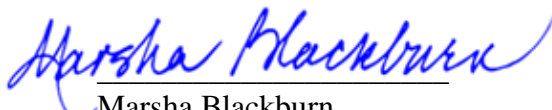
Ted Cruz
United States Senator



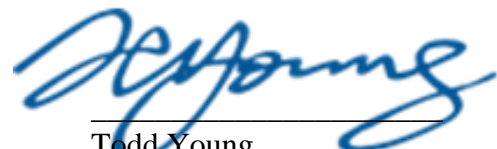
Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator



Deb Fischer
United States Senator



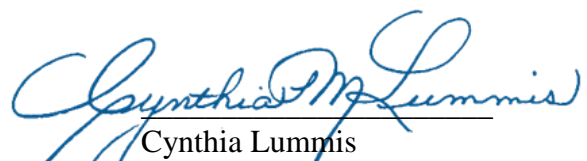
Marsha Blackburn
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