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June 14, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Raimondo:

Thank you for your tireless efforts to empower American communities through economic growth and opportunity and the Investing in America agenda. Your leadership at the Department of Commerce has been instrumental to the successful implementation of the historic investments in the *CHIPS and Science Act*, the *Inflation Reduction Act*, and the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*.

As you know, one of the many impactful programs in the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* is the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program, administered by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) at the Department of Commerce. This program will expand high-speed internet access across the United States and bridge the digital divide. With nearly \$43 billion in funding, many local government offices will receive a flood of applications to deploy infrastructure—the towers, fiber, and small cells needed to provide broadband connections—and may have limited resources for reviewing and processing these applications.

Now is the time to ensure our communities can capitalize on these federal investments. That is why I introduced H.R. 1241, the *Broadband Incentives for Communities Act*, to provide local governments with the resources needed to effectively deploy BEAD funds. Local governments need financial support to hire and train employees, purchase software, and upgrade capabilities to efficiently navigate the permitting process and begin these projects. Many of the communities that need broadband access the most have the fewest resources to implement these projects. We must ensure that they are not left behind while we make this monumental investment in the country's broadband infrastructure.

I have learned that these types of expenses will be considered eligible under the BEAD Program. I encourage NTIA and the Department of Commerce to issue clear guidance on this point so that local stakeholders know they can utilize these funds to improve their permitting processes. As you know, successful implementation of the BEAD Program will require partnership between federal, state, and local governments, and the private sector. I am ready to assist your team in every way possible, and happy to discuss this or other recommendations to support our local governments' implementation of broadband investments at any time.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lizzie Fletcher".

Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress