

May 30, 2025

The Honorable Howard Lutnick
Secretary of Commerce
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Lutnick,

We want to thank you for your leadership as you look to accelerate our nation's global competitiveness and advance our nation's leadership in technologies such as artificial intelligence, while providing access to jobs, education, and world-class healthcare to all Americans. Despite the past challenges and delays in getting the BEAD program off the ground, you are in the unique position to streamline and accelerate this program, enabling it to realize its full potential. We believe the enormous investments made by the private sector provide a model upon which to base your decision.

Over the past decades, the private sector has invested more than \$2 trillion in broadband infrastructure – much of that for fiber connectivity. From a standing start twenty-five years ago, the private sector has stepped up and has deployed fiber broadband to over 56.5% of the households in the U.S. by the end of 2024, growing 13% year-over-year. This represents by far the fastest wireline deployment in U.S. history.

Broadband providers such as AT&T have committed to deploying fiber to 60 million homes by the end of the decade. Verizon, with its acquisition of Frontier, will pass 40 million homes with fiber, and T-Mobile is targeting 12 to 15 million fiber passing by 2030. Other providers are following the lead of the large incumbents. Hawaiian Telcom is investing \$1.7B, with public private partnerships to get fiber to every home in Hawaii by the end of 2026. Zply will reach 3.1 million fiber passing by 2029, and Altice has already passed three million homes with fiber, and growing.

While the private sector will get most of the country's 140 million homes connected, there are still some 5.5 million households, largely in rural and farming communities that need BEAD infrastructure funding. These unserved and underserved communities matter. The Commerce Department can give these communities, and their residents, businesses, and institutions, the same opportunities that the private sector is giving to most all of the U.S. -- the critical fiber broadband infrastructure that will enable 5G and better mobile wireless services, smartgrid modernization, AI, quantum networking, public safety, and future services that we cannot even imagine today. The benefit of the bargain is to use BEAD funds to achieve these aims.

Following the private sector also means that significant manufacturing will be onshored. Several of the Fiber Broadband Association members, in complying with Build America, Buy America requirements, have already invested nearly \$650 million to bring manufacturing back to the U.S. and have created 5,600 new jobs in the process. This effort has led to an additional 1,325,000 square feet of manufacturing capacity added with either new manufacturing facilities being built and/or expanded over the past two years -- representing 72+ manufacturing facilities across 28 states.

We understand that a mix of technologies will be leveraged to accomplish BEAD's goal but ask that you use this opportunity to make a generational impact on the communities and families we plan to connect. And we believe that the state broadband directors and their offices are best positioned to make this happen. They have spent years studying every unserved and underserved location in their state. They have the best understanding of their budget, the topology, their climate, unique challenges, and the families and communities that they seek to serve. There is no group better qualified and accountable to make the best decisions on which technology should be used to serve each broadband serviceable location in their state. We hope that you place the same level of trust and confidence in their abilities and expertise as we do.

We are confident that you can clearly see the public benefit of ensuring that our taxpayers are getting the best long-term investment from the BEAD program. We look forward to working with you toward ensuring this program is a major success for the Administration and for these unserved and underserved American families.

Sincerely,



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