



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

October 15, 2019

The Honorable Steve Daines  
United States Senate  
320 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Daines:

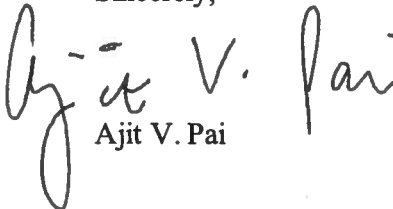
Thank you for your letter regarding the Federal Communications Commission's E-Rate program. I agree that an effective and efficient E-Rate program—one that promotes better connectivity for students and library patrons alike—can be a powerful tool to help bridge the digital divide. And I appreciate your support for the regulatory modernization we've introduced in order to bridge that divide in rural states like Montana.

With respect to the concern you expressed regarding overbuilding, several Texas carriers filed a petition for rulemaking urging the Commission to prohibit the use of E-Rate funds for special construction of fiber networks that overbuild existing fiber networks. The Commission's Wireline Competition Bureau sought comment on this petition, and the comment cycle has been completed. Commission staff is carefully reviewing the record.

In addition, I want to note that the FCC is seeking to create a Digital Opportunity Data Collection in order to generate more granular and more accurate broadband maps. As part of this effort, we sought comment on how the maps and datasets can be used to avoid duplicative funding in the E-Rate program. I can assure you that we will take into consideration the issues and concerns presented by all stakeholders each in these proceedings.

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

Sincerely,

  
Ajit V. Pai