



September 28, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Keven McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, & Minority Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of the members of the Edison Electric Institute (EEI), the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association (NTCA), and the Utilities Technology Council (UTC), we write to support bipartisan calls for Congress to extend the current deadline by which funds made available for state, local, territorial, and tribal governments in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act must be spent. In addition, we request that Congress clarify that these funds are eligible for permanent long-term broadband infrastructure to aid consumers lacking access to broadband.

With millions of Americans across the country working remotely, children attending classes virtually, and Americans seeking telehealth care services, Internet connectivity and the infrastructure needed to provide it are more important than ever. A number of state, local, tribal or territorial governments have identified robust, affordable broadband as a coronavirus-related need and are spending a portion of their available coronavirus relief funds on long-term broadband infrastructure. Other state, local, tribal or territorial governments have identified this as a need but want clarification from Congress that it is an eligible expense prior to moving forward.

Additionally, time is running short for these entities to spend coronavirus relief funds prior to the December 2020 deadline. Yet, access to broadband connectivity will continue to be a priority well into the future as the economy adjusts to a new normal.

As Representatives Aderholt and Welch highlighted in a letter to you on August 7, 2020, and echoed by other bipartisan letters, Congress should ensure that the funds may be utilized to adequately bridge the digital divide for those consumers that need it most and provide flexibility on the date by which funds must be spent.

As Congress continues its work on the federal response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we encourage Congress to promote flexibility for states to invest in long-term broadband infrastructure and to

provide additional time for states to make decisions about the most effective use of these funds to address needs identified in response to the pandemic. This investment will assist in bridging the digital divide nationwide by expanding connectivity and improving internet infrastructure at the middle and last mile.

On behalf of our members, thank you for the opportunity to raise this important issue with you. Increasing broadband infrastructure expenditures is a responsible investment that will play a key role in our nation's pandemic response and recovery. We appreciate your leadership and look forward to continuing to work with you.

Sincerely,

Edison Electric Institute  
National Rural Electric Cooperative Association  
NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association  
Utilities Technology Council

cc: U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation  
U.S. House Committee on Energy & Commerce  
The Honorable Roger F. Wicker  
The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.  
The Honorable Greg Walden