



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

March 14, 2018

The Honorable Peter Welch
U.S. House of Representatives
2303 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Welch:

Thank you for your letter expressing concern about Commission action on Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee (BDAC) recommendations. I share your view that broadband is a vital resource for all Americans, and the FCC must do everything it can to speed the deployment of broadband in underserved parts of the country.

I've long said that every American who wants to participate in the digital economy should be able to do so. And the plain reality is that if you live in rural America, you are much less likely to have high-speed Internet access than if you live in a city. If you live in a low-income neighborhood, you are less likely to have high-speed Internet access than if you live in a wealthier area. To change that, we need massive investment to construct, expand, and improve wired and wireless networks. And to spur that investment, in turn, the FCC needs to remove outdated and unnecessary regulatory barriers.

I hope you agree with me that rural America has waited long enough. It's been eight years since the adoption of the National Broadband Plan, and too many millions of Americans are still awaiting its promise. That's why the Commission has moved forward over the last year to cut the redtape that has unnecessarily delayed the deployment of broadband throughout America. That's why at my first open meeting as FCC Chairman, I announced the establishment of the BDAC. The work of the BDAC is a crucial component of our efforts to close the digital divide for the many Americans that lack sufficient high-speed Internet access—and one we must consider to pursue vigorously.

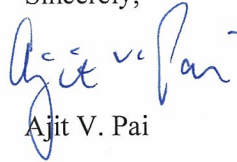
I have been so pleased with the progress of the BDAC over the course the year, resulting in a number of final recommendations in January—all approved by at least a super-majority of members, with many approved unanimously. I should note that approved recommendations, along with materials from the meetings and proposed recommendations, are posted on the Commission's website, and interested parties are welcome to provide input to the BDAC in the electronic docket established for that purpose, GN Docket No. 17-83. I look forward to hearing your views, and the views of those not serving on the BDAC, on these particular recommendations as the Commission continues its work to close the digital divide.

Finally, you note the need to ensure reasonably comparable service in rural America. I agree. That's one reason why the Commission maintained the 25 Mbps/3 Mbps benchmark for high-speed fixed broadband service and concluded that mobile broadband is not a full substitute

for fixed service. And that's why I asked my colleagues earlier this year to support my push for an additional \$500 million in universal service funding to help bridge the digital divide in areas served by small rural carriers and cooperatives.

I look forward to working with you and your staff as we pursue the common goal to extend digital opportunity to every American. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ajit" and last name "Pai" being the most prominent parts.

Ajit V. Pai