

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 27, 2025

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

Dear Secretary Lutnick:

We write to urge you to reverse harmful changes to the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program created under the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. In June 2025, the Department of Commerce announced changes to this vital program that will threaten broadband access in New Hampshire, especially in rural and underserved communities that most need it.

As you know, the BEAD program provides funding to states to improve access to high-speed internet across the country. BEAD projects are in every state and will ensure that Americans have access to the high-quality internet service they need for the 21st century economy. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which created the BEAD program, explicitly requires state agencies disbursing BEAD funds to prioritize broadband projects based on “the speeds of the proposed broadband service” and “the expediency with which a project can be completed.”

Unfortunately, new guidelines released by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) on June 6, 2025 effectively remove the ability of state agencies to award BEAD funds to broadband providers who will best combine high-quality internet service with cost-efficient construction of broadband infrastructure. The administration has now removed discretion from state and local communities, instead requiring that BEAD funds be allocated solely to the lowest-cost projects—even if those projects deliver extremely low-quality internet service to rural areas.

This change is especially harmful to rural Granite Staters, who may now be limited to slow, weather-dependent internet. We would be pleased to welcome you to New Hampshire’s North Country, where you could visit some of the communities that stand to benefit the most from BEAD funding. These towns get heavy snow and rain, and famously, the Mount Washington Valley experiences some of the highest winds in the world. By restricting states from choosing the most effective broadband options for their local communities, the Department of Commerce is undermining state and local efforts to bolster economic development across New Hampshire and the nation.

Additionally, these abrupt changes are set to potentially derail the disbursement of funds to states that have been expecting them. For example, New Hampshire already has a five-year plan approved by NTIA and is ready to receive \$191 million in BEAD funds. In light of the

uncertainty the new guidance has caused, our state must now determine how to proceed should the Department reverse its prior commitments.

Congress created the BEAD program to close the digital divide and connect communities lacking access to high-quality, reliable broadband service. For this reason, we urge you to reverse the administration's recent changes to the program immediately.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Maggie Goodlander
Member of Congress



Chris Pappas
Member of Congress

Cc:

The Honorable Kelly Ayotte, Governor of New Hampshire

Taylor Caswell, Commissioner, New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs