

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4805

May 7, 2021

Mr. Alan L. Harris  
Acting State Director  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1550 Earl Core Road, Suite 101  
Morgantown, WV 26505

Dear Director Harris,

I write in regards to the Pocahontas County Board of Education's application for funding through the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant program. Funding would allow the Board to connect Green Bank Elementary Middle School students to the internet, and I am in full support of their application.

Due to its proximity to the Green Bank Observatory and the National Radio Quiet Zone, Green Bank Elementary Middle School cannot use WiFi technology. This puts Pocahontas County students at a disadvantage, as they lack access to critical online and distance learning tools. Particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen how critical internet access is to allow our students to learn and thrive.

To combat this, the Pocahontas County Board of Education is seeking funding from the United States Department of Agriculture to develop and enact the Devices to Combat the Digital Divide project. This project will allow the Board to provide internet access to Green Bank Elementary Middle School, and purchase laptops for every K-7<sup>th</sup> grade student in the county. Taken together, these improvements will connect students in Pocahontas County with critical telemedicine and distance learning services.

I am proud to see the Pocahontas County Board of Education's efforts to provide internet access to all their students. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, reliable broadband is a basic necessity, and I am supportive of all efforts to ensure that my fellow West Virginians have access to this basic tool. West Virginia's brightest days are ahead of us, and I am encouraged by Pocahontas County's efforts to reduce the digital divide. I hope you will give this application your full consideration.

Sincerely,



Shelley Moore Capito  
United States Senator