

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 9, 2016

President-Elect Donald J. Trump  
Trump Tower  
725 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10022

Dear Mr. President-Elect:

I write to you because I am encouraged by your commitment to strengthen our nation's infrastructure. As you strive to streamline projects that drive economic growth, I urge you to include broadband deployment as a component of the infrastructure proposal that guides your administration.

As a pillar of our 21<sup>st</sup> century infrastructure, high-speed internet access has allowed us to connect with one another on a scale we never would have imagined even a decade ago. No other technology has become such a platform for innovation, competition, and economic growth. The same smart government policies you have outlined for our nation's pipelines and highways should be applied to robust broadband deployment.

It is essential that all communities have access to internet platforms that will help them connect and compete on a global scale. Small, rural communities across my state lack this fundamental infrastructure – and lack access to vital opportunities as a result. Broadband expands access to education, allows for those in rural areas to receive crucial medical help and allows businesses to thrive. A recent study by the Federal Communications Commission indicates that 56 percent of West Virginia residents do not have access to broadband services that meet its benchmarks. In rural areas of the state, this number is as high as 74 percent. West Virginia cannot attract and retain businesses if we are not connected, and we cannot succeed if we do not have the tools necessary to compete.

Pursuing policies that generate broadband expansion and access can and should play a key role. These policies include: reducing barriers to investment in infrastructure, streamlining the regulatory environment for wireless providers, encouraging public-private partnerships, and ensuring accountability on behalf of the taxpayer for federally funded projects.

West Virginia needs to grow and diversify its overall economy, and internet access is fundamental to that transition. Broadband can revolutionize rural communities by linking them to the national, and even global, economy.

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I look forward to working with your administration to advance policies that bridge the digital divide across the country and provide the broadband infrastructure that our nation's urban and rural communities need to succeed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shelley Moore Capito". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent dot above the letter 'i' in "Capito".

Shelley Moore Capito  
United States Senator