

# BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT

## Ensure the Timely Deployment of IIJA Broadband Funds

### Action Needed:

Tell the House and Senate to:

- (1) Continue oversight into the BEAD program to help ensure NTIA's timely deployment of IIJA broadband construction funds; and
- (2) Ensure broadband funds are not delayed by red tape or by attempts to achieve other policy goals.

### Background:

Congress provided over \$42 billion for broadband deployment in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) that was signed into law in November of 2021. In June 2023, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) notified states and territories of their Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program funding allocations, guaranteeing each state a baseline allocation of \$100 million, and each territory a \$25 million guarantee for broadband deployment. It has been nearly three years since the IIJA was signed into law and there are still no projects that have broken ground.

The main culprit of this delay is the NTIA, who has been slow to approve project proposals. In July 2024, the House Energy & Commerce Committee opened an investigation into NTIA's deployment of BEAD, stating that NTIA's review process is operating in an "opaque nature," while noting that the NTIA appears to be basing approvals based on rate regulation, which the IIJA strictly forbids. The Committee has also stated that the NTIA has not provided them with information on whether rate regulation is occurring, despite commitments for transparency from the agency.

### AGC Message:

- **Congress must continue their oversight of the BEAD program.** While we understand the need of the federal government to ensure good stewardship of taxpayer dollars, Congress must need to ensure that these funds go to actual broadband projects. Congress should ensure that IIJA-funded broadband projects are authorized and completed around the country in a timely manner.
- **Ensure broadband funds are not delayed by red tape.** Unfortunately, as we have seen with some IIJA construction investment programs, the Administration has gotten overly consumed with achieving other policy goals in implementation of the program, delaying realization of the program's primary benefits. Congress must ensure that the NTIA is approving projects in the way it is written under the law and that projects are not delayed by rate regulation or other mandates beyond the law's scope.
- **Fund federal broadband programs.** The BEAD program and other federal broadband funds are helping us take a significant step towards achieving universal internet access in the United States. Congress should continue to fund these critical programs, expanding internet access to all Americans.