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February 19, 2021

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

Congratulations on your election and your successful start as President of the United States.

As president of the North Carolina League of Municipalities, I write to you on behalf of the 540 cities and towns in this state to urge you and your designees on the Federal Communication Commission do all in your power to improve broadband access.

As I am sure that you are aware, broadband is no longer a luxury. It is critical infrastructure required for educational, professional and business opportunities. During this time of global pandemic, that reality has been laid bare. In North Carolina, we have seen school children and their parents struggle for access to online learning, workers met with unreliable connections to perform job tasks from home, and business owners' strain to connect with customers and vendors.

The digital divide is most pronounced in North Carolina's rural towns and unincorporated areas, but urban residents suffer as well due to issues of affordability and reliability of service.

As you consider this issue and its effects across the United States, we urge you and your designees on the Federal Communications Commission to consider the longstanding inadequacies in FCC mapping of broadband availability, and how these maps allow internet providers to claim service that simply does not exist. This mapping has the effect of understating the need for better access and allows incumbent providers to hide their failures in meeting the needs of customers.

It is also important to recognize that Americans living in urban, suburban and rural areas will continue to require improvements in internet speed and reliability in order to meet citizens' needs and to remain globally competitive. Supporting legislative and policy efforts that allow and incentivize the use of local government resources to partner with broadband providers is one means to make that a reality.

We ask that your administration support congressional efforts such as the Community Broadband Act of 2019.

To meet the communications challenges of the 21st century, we must use all tools in our reach. Roadblocks at the federal or state level that prevent that kind of approach need to be cleared for all Americans to reach their potential.

If the North Carolina League of Municipalities can be of any assistance in furthering federal efforts to improve broadband access, please call on us to do so. To contact me, please email williams@nclm.org. We want to be a part of the solution.

Thank you for your consideration of these issues, and we wish you great success in addressing the many challenges before your administration and before the country.

Most respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robinson".

Jennifer Robinson
President
N.C. League of Municipalities