State Connections

The broadband working group for state legislators

First Friday of Every Month 4:00 ET / 3:00 CT / 2:00 MT / 1:00 PT

WE WILL BEGIN SHORTLY!



State Connections BEAD/DE Letter

115 Bipartisan Signatories (we will continue to accept signatures)

28 States

 Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin

April 3, 2025

Secretary Howard Lutnick U.S. Department of Commerce 1401 Constitution Avenue, NW Washington, D.C. 20230

Adam Cassady NTIA Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary and Deputy Administrator Arielle Roth, Nominee, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications & Information

RE: BEAD and DE Implementation

Congratulations on your confirmation as Secretary of Commerce. We look forward to working with you to bring fast, reliable, affordable broadband to every last one of our constituents.

We, the undersigned group of 115 bipartisan state legislators representing 28 states (NTIA) allow state Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) and Digital Equity (DE) programs to proceed without delay. If NTIA changes program conditions, we ask that those

programs. And, so far, it is going very well. For BEAD, initial grant rounds have resulted in nearly universal coverage, widespread competition, and substantial winnings for local and regional providers.² For example, Louisiana has achieved 95% fiber coverage, 3% wireless/cable, and 2% satellite: Nevada achieved 83% fiber coverage, 7% wireless/cable, and 9% satellite; and Delaware achieved 100% fiber coverage. These are incredible results, and the flexibility to prioritize fiber while still incorporating wireless and satellite technologies will bring our constituents high-quality, affordable service at reasonable costs, For DE, our states are creating programs that address the full range of digital needs-skills for agriculture, healthcare, personal finance and entrepreneurship, online safety, cybersecurity, and efficient use of government

¹ Former NTIA Official: BEAD Changes Could Add Years to Deploym

² Summary of state results to date

³ Letter from Gov. Landry of Louisiana

Press Coverage

Benton Institute: States to DC: "No More BEAD Delays"

Broadband Breakfast: State Legislators: Don't Upend BEAD

CNET & AOL: No More Broadband Delays, State Legislators Urge DC

GovTech: What's New in Digital Equity: States Push for BEAD Progress

StateScoop: 115 state legislators pen letter to Commerce Dept. with concerns over proposed changes to BEAD program

Telecompetitor: More Legislators Request Status Quo for BEAD

Communications Daily: Don't Delay BEAD Anymore, Bipartisan State Lawmakers Urge NTIA

Law360: Forge Ahead On Broadband Deployment Funds, States Say

Light Reading: State lawmakers urge Lutnick not to delay BEAD with forced changes

Policyband: State Reps to Lutnick: Keep Starlink Away

TR Daily: State Lawmakers Ask Lutnick to 'Tread Carefully' on BEAD Program Changes (Paywall)

Miscellaneous Updates - Federal

- Hearing for Arielle Roth nomination to NTIA held she was non-committal in discussing changes. She would not even commit to the state's allocations being left alone.
- West Virginia is done with their BEAD process but decided to request a 90-day extension rather than send in their final report and relook at processes.
- We are hearing that more states are becoming concerned about having their broadband process stopped.
- We are also hearing that mid-May is when the changes are anticipated but we are hearing different things about the extent of the changes.
- One option we are hearing is to put a price limit that can be spent per location this could steer or guide awards to certain type of technology.

Miscellaneous Updates - Federal

- Consistently hearing get rid of labor requirements, revision or elimination of line of credit requirements and get rid of affordability requirements.
- We talked to some providers to get an idea of the cost of filing a BEAD application. We found some as high as \$200,000.
- Missouri Show Me Broadband Coalition did a similar support letter, state-specific with over 60 stakeholder, state legislators and others signing to allow MO to finish their process without delay
- We are creating one pager, State Broadband Overview, to include broadband information in your state including BEAD process and allocations, RDOF default details, etc. Link to a sample is here.
 - We will create the one-pager for your state. Send email to Janie or Drew at the emails on the last slide.

Arkansas Update

17 Bipartisan Signatories!

Initial BEAD Results:

Bringing fiber to over 50% of locations for less than 25% of the allocation.

State Senator Jane English reports:

- Arkansas had 50% to serviceable locations spending less than 25% allocation
- Cost \$5,000 per location average
- 14 of the 17 electric coops are participating in 98% of service areas
- 17 Arkansas legislators signed the letter to Commerce. Jane educated the Senate Pro Tem about the purpose of the letter and said we needed signatures. It was sent to the legislators and had a good response.

Wisconsin Update

21 Bipartisan Signatories!

Press Release!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Date: April 3, 2025

Contact: (608) 237-9147

Representative Udell Defends Wisconsin's Broadband Funding

MADISON — Today, 115 legislators from twenty-eight states urged the federal government to maintain the \$42.45 billion Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) program. This bipartisan letter, addressed to Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick, warns against redirecting these funds to satellite providers such as Elon Musk's Starlink.

Rep. Randy Udell (D-47th District) circulated this letter in Wisconsin alongside Rep. Jeffrey Mursau (R-36th District) and Sen. Melissa Ratcliff (D-16th District). Twenty-one Wisconsin legislators joined as signatories.

Rep. Udell released the following statement:

"In 2023, the BEAD program promised Wisconsin over \$1 billion to provide reliable, high-speed internet to every serviceable home. This program works – it's achieved 95% fiber coverage in Louisiana and 100% in Delaware, and implementation in Wisconsin will begin this year.

"Broadband's fiber lines can handle our growing technological needs while satellite systems struggle to keep up. Changes to the BEAD program now could set us back years. There is no reason to delay Wisconsin's internet expansion by redirecting our funds into Elon Musk's pockets."

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Wisconsin Broadband

• BEAD: \$1.06 Billion

Locations: 375,000

Timeline:

Bidding wrapping up

Implementation scheduled this year

RDOF Defaults: \$210,478,577

BEAD Letter: 21 signatories

Circulation Memo

Outreach

Press Release yesterday

Considering Op-Eds





Member Updates

Legislation? Questions? Discussion Topics?

- Oregon Legislative Update
 - o Rep. Pam Marsh
 - Working group proposed legislation to expand lifeline program in Oregon to help broadband affordability
 - Expanded amount from 8 cents to 35 cents for telephone lines and Oregon subsidy increased
 - All without a tax increase (Oregon also has their own state lifeline program)
 - Link to the bill language OR HB3148
 - Grateful to sign the letter
 - Will be doing press release as well

Member Updates

Legislation? Questions? Discussion Topics?

- Indiana Legislative Update
 - Rep. Andy Zay
 - Rep Zay said he signed the letter because we don't need to stop. This is the sentiment of many.
 - Indiana had bids on 94% of the addresses/service areas and do not want to start over.
 - Indiana had a hearing on pole attachments as this is an area they want to make easier.
 - We had discussed the importance of having Governors support the effort. Rep Zay offered to talk with his Governor.

Contact Information

Janie Dunning

janiedunning@hotmail.com

(573) 289-4277

Drew Garner

dgarner@benton.org

(314) 803-7187