



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

DIVISION OF PUBLIC UTILITIES & CARRIERS

Administration

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February 11, 2025

The Honorable Jacquelyn M. Baginski
House Committee on Innovation, Internet & Technology
State House
Providence, R.I. 02903

Re: H 5122 – Amendment-Broadband Deployment and Investment Act

Dear Chair Baginski:

The Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (Division) recognizes the need for outreach to assist the low and moderate-income public in identifying and applying for low-cost broadband service programs such as that which had been provided through the federal Affordable Connectivity Program. Unfortunately, that program failed to gain federal funding reauthorization and is no longer operating.

As far as the broader issue of outreach to communities that face broadband connectivity challenges, we do believe that the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation, is far better situated with planning and resources to conduct this outreach than we are, as a regulatory body.

Commerce has established a broadband strategy program which, among other things, includes outreach, and oversees federal funding from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) through the Broadband Equity access and Deployment (BEAD) Program and the Capital Projects Fund. Additionally, Commerce has initiated statewide broadband mapping with the aim of expanding connectivity and maintaining quality service. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Linda George".

Linda George, Esq.

Administrator, RI Division of Public Utilities and Carriers

CC. Rep. John J. Lombardi
House Committee on Innovation, Internet, and Technology
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel