

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 11, 2021

The Honorable Janet Yellen
Secretary
United States Department of Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Secretary Yellen,

We write you to applaud the recent guidance released by the Treasury Department announcing next steps to implement the Capital Projects Fund that we successfully included in the American Rescue Plan. As your guidance accurately reflects, this provision was drafted in recognition of and with the intent to address the urgent connectivity gaps and challenges that hamper too many Americans, undermining telework, online education, and telehealth efforts – and more recently, undermining vaccination efforts that depend upon access to the internet for public health announcements and registration activities. Your guidance emphasizes the critical fact that effective utilization of capital investments associated with providing and improving broadband connectivity requires financial support for devices, digital inclusion and skills training, broadband affordability, and related ancillary initiatives.


In the weeks and months since the American Rescue Plan was enacted, we have each heard from state and local leaders who have expressed great enthusiasm about the prospect of the Capital Projects Fund to enable broadband access for their constituents. While a larger effort to close the broadband gap is necessary – as the Biden Infrastructure Plan makes clear – we are confident that the Capital Projects Fund can address critical connectivity gaps that continue to prevent Americans from fully participating in telework, telehealth, and online education during the pandemic. We believe that the Capital Projects Fund can serve as a bridge towards this larger initiative, particularly in the wake of successful state-led broadband projects deployed in the last year using CARES Act funding and the flexibility to use the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds for broadband. These efforts will need coordination to ensure the best use of funds, but we feel strongly that the Capital Projects Fund will enable states, territories, and Tribes to build on these early efforts.

We look forward to the Treasury Department's future guidance on how states, territories, and Tribes may access these critical funds for connectivity investments and the implementation of the Capital Projects Fund. Thank you for your leadership and attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator