



Reps. Lujan Grisham, O'Halleran Introduce Rural Broadband Expansion Act

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Press Release

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Reps. Michelle Lujan Grisham (NM-1) and Rep. Tom O'Halleran (AZ-1) introduced the Rural Broadband Expansion Act which would authorize \$100 million in new grant funding to expand broadband in rural areas throughout the country.

The legislation would give the Secretary of Agriculture authority to use the Community Connect Grant Program to finance broadband transmission in rural areas where it is not yet economically viable for private sector providers to deliver service. Communities could use the money for new equipment and capacity enhancements that support high-speed broadband access for educational institutions, health care providers, and public safety service providers, in addition to connecting homes and businesses. The \$100 million would be authorized each year through 2023.

"High-speed internet has revolutionized every aspect of the U.S. economy, including education, health care, and agriculture," Rep. Lujan Grisham said. "Unfortunately, there remains a distinct rural-urban broadband access divide and nowhere is the problem more severe than in New Mexico, where 61% of New Mexicans living in rural areas and 80% of New Mexicans living on tribal land lack broadband, compared to only 10% of urban Americans nationally.

"Expanding broadband access would grow my state's economy, create jobs, boost wages, improve health outcomes, support small business growth, help our students learn, increase crop yields, and so much more," Lujan Grisham said.

"Investing in rural high-speed internet infrastructure will unlock great economic and educational potential for communities throughout rural Arizona and across the West," said Rep. O'Halleran. "This bill will allow small businesses to access global markets, and it will provide our students with the resources will set them up for a successful future and give them the skills they need to fill 21st century jobs."

Rep. Lujan Grisham also led a bipartisan letter, which more than 30 Members of Congress signed, urging the House Agriculture Committee to address the lack of rural broadband access in the upcoming Farm Bill. You can view the letter [here](#).

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