**March 2, 2023 Sen. Cantwell Staff Meeting with BATs**

1. **Broadband Maps**

·         CostQuest Location Updates to the Broadband Fabric (Version 2)

o   According to the FCC, the version of the map used to award BEAD funds to states will be Version 2 of the Fabric overlaid with Dec. 31 service availability data submitted by providers, plus successful service availability challenges that have been resolved by June.

o   Independent of the challenge process, CostQuest has an ongoing “self-improvement” process, where it reviews and corrects locations it missed or categorized wrong on the location Fabric. Nationwide, it added 1.04 million locations to Version 2.

o   We asked CostQuest to provide us some Washington State-specific data on changes from Version 1 to Version 2, including Tribal Areas raised in our BATs meetings that have significant errors on the broadband maps:

o   Statewide, CostQuest added 13,171 locations to Version 2. This includes about 11,289 Broadband Serviceable Locations. (Total WA locations in V2: 2.54 million).

o   For all Tribal Areas in WA: CostQuest added 714 more BSLs after removing false positives from Version 1.

§  Colville Confederated Tribes: CostQuest added 60 more BSLs.

§  Nisqually Tribe: CostQuest added 31 more BSLs.

§  Spokane Tribe: CostQuest added 320 more locations, plus 2 locations on off-reservation trust land.

o   Sen. Cantwell Staff Action Item: We are following up with CostQuest to ask (1) the extent CostQuest can reach out to local counties to get their location data and (2) whether CostQuest can provide regular updates on the areas they are self-improving, so that the state and local BATs can make the best use of their limited resources and focus on the areas CostQuest is not checking, avoiding duplicative work.

·         Help with Challenge Process

o   Help for counties re location challenges: NoaNet is helping submit statewide bulk location challenges to the Fabric, for counties that are not submitting their own challenges. They are helping more resource-strapped counties have a baseline view of where they stand in the FCC Version 2 Fabric. Counties should be hearing about this opportunity via the WSAC distribution list. If you need more information, please reach out to WSBO (mark.vasconi@commerce.wa.gov) , NoaNet (claire.ward@noanet.net; chris.walker@noanet.net), and Ariane Schmidt (aeschmidt@spokanecounty.org).

o   Help with obtaining licenses to access CostQuest’s location Fabric: CostQuest has free licenses available for accessing its location Fabric. Please reach out to WSU Extension (nick.papping@wsu.edu; dustin.loup@wsu.edu) if you would like a tutorial on how to obtain these licenses.

1. **Workforce Development**

·         Sen. Cantwell staff attended NTIA’s congressional briefing today 3/6 on workforce development for BEAD. The takeaway is that workforce development is one eligible use for BEAD funds. We have attached NTIA’s workforce planning guide. Pages 51-52 of the guide helps summarize the ways NTIA permits BEAD funds to support workforce development, such as using last-mile deployment funds for apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs, community college/vocational for telecommunications-related jobs, and cybersecurity education.

·         Sen. Cantwell Staff Action Item: We will do more digging on this issue, including looking at funds outside of BEAD that may be used for workforce development for broadband projects.

1. **WSBO Updates**

·         Introduced Jeff Rasmussen from WSBO, who will attend BAT meetings and help coordinate with the BATs and WSU Extension.

·         Second round of NOFO process: 10 challenges received out of 52 applications. WSBO hopes to have award decisions by the end of March.

·         BEAD planning – WSBO noted the 8/13 deadline for the state’s five-year plan and the 9/1 deadline for the digital equity plan.

o   Counties are encouraged to submit a county plan to help WSBO formulate its state plan, though a county will be eligible to receive funding regardless of whether it submits a plan. WSU Extension has a “Writing Broadband Action and Digital Equity Plans” workbook to help counties formulate their plans.

o   WSBO’s consultant for BEAD planning Guidehouse, NTIA, and WSU will be holding a kickoff meeting for the BEAD planning process, most likely on March 22.