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For Immediate Release

FCC INCREASES BROADBAND SPEED BENCHMARK

Annual Agency Assessment of High-Speed Internet Service Deployment Establishes New Standard to Better Reflect the Broadband Needs of American Households

WASHINGTON, March 14, 2024—The Federal Communications Commission today adopted its annual assessment of whether advanced telecommunications capability is being deployed in a reasonable and timely fashion across the U.S. In addition to deployment, the Report considers broadband affordability, adoption, availability, and equitable access, when determining whether broadband is being deployed in a reasonable and timely fashion to “all Americans.” The Commission’s Report, issued pursuant to section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, raises the Commission’s benchmark for high-speed fixed broadband to download speeds of 100 megabits per second and upload speeds of 20 megabits per second – a four-fold increase from the 25/3 Mbps benchmark set by the Commission in 2015.

The increase in the Commission’s fixed speed benchmark for advanced telecommunications capability is based on the standards now used in multiple federal and state programs (such as NTIA’s BEAD Program and multiple USF programs), consumer usage patterns, and what is actually available from and marketed by internet service providers.

The Report concludes that advanced telecommunications capability is *not* being deployed in a reasonable and timely fashion based on the total number of Americans, Americans in rural areas, and people living on Tribal lands who lack access to such capability, and the fact that these gaps in deployment are not closing rapidly enough.

Using the agency’s Broadband Data Collection deployment data for the first time rather than FCC Form 477 data, the Report shows that, as of December 2022:

- Fixed terrestrial broadband service (excluding satellite) has not been physically deployed to approximately 24 million Americans, including almost 28% of Americans in rural areas, and more than 23% of people living on Tribal lands;
- Mobile 5G-NR coverage has not been physically deployed at minimum speeds of 35/3 Mbps to roughly 9% of all Americans, to almost 36% of Americans in rural areas, and to more than 20% of people living on Tribal lands;
- 45 million Americans lack access to both 100/20 Mbps fixed service and 35/3 Mbps mobile 5G-NR service; and
- Based on the new 1 Gbps per 1,000 students and staff short-term benchmark for schools and classrooms, 74% of school districts meet this goal.

The Report also sets a 1 Gbps/500 Mbps long-term goal for broadband speeds to give stakeholders a collective goal towards which to strive – a better, faster, more robust system of communication for American consumers.

Action by the Commission March 14, 2024 by Report (FCC 24-27). Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Starks and Gomez approving. Commissioners Carr and Simington dissenting. Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr, Starks, Simington, and Gomez issuing separate statements.

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*This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).*