

**NTIA Tribal Consultation**

**January 20, 2026**

**Moderators: Angela Thi Bennett & Margaret Gutierrez**

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00:00:00.340 --> 00:00:02.410

Julia Pulidindi: This meeting is being recorded.

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00:00:08.410 --> 00:00:12.970

Julia Pulidindi: Right, and then at, 1 o'clock, I'll go ahead and start the webinar. I'll--

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00:00:13.260 --> 00:00:23.230

Julia Pulidindi: I'll let everyone know we'll start in a few minutes, in a minute or two, and Bianca, if you want to wait till 3.01 to start the recording, just so we can let the room fill up, that would be good.

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00:00:25.030 --> 00:00:26.219

Bianca Benedi: Okay, sounds good.

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00:00:26.560 --> 00:00:27.250

Julia Pulidindi: Oops.

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00:00:29.110 --> 00:00:33.279

Julia Pulidindi: Alright, feel free to, go on mute and turn your cameras off.

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00:01:03.290 --> 00:01:07.489

Julia Pulidindi: Hi everyone, thanks for joining us today. We will start in just a minute.

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00:01:50.120 --> 00:02:02.110

Arielle Roth: Hello, and welcome to NTIA's Tribal Consultation. My name is Arielle Roth, and I serve as Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information and NTIA Administrator.

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00:02:02.220 --> 00:02:05.980

Arielle Roth: I'd like to thank the esteemed Tribal leaders who have joined us today.

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00:02:06.210 --> 00:02:14.389

Arielle Roth: This consultation underscores our shared commitment to advancing connectivity and addressing the unique needs of Tribal communities.

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00:02:14.480 --> 00:02:25.640

Arielle Roth: As we announced last year, NTIA is reforming its broadband programs, including its Tribal programs, to promote flexibility and better align NTIA's grant opportunities.

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00:02:25.640 --> 00:02:35.069

Arielle Roth: Our goal is to ensure that every taxpayer dollar stretches as far as possible to achieve universal connectivity across the nation, including on Tribal lands.

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00:02:35.070 --> 00:02:49.000

Arielle Roth: The insights you bring to this important discussion represent the next critical step in shaping the policies that best serve Tribal needs. Your feedback and your ideas are essential as we work together to maximize the impact of our initiatives.

14  
00:02:49.040 --> 00:02:57.730

Arielle Roth: During these consultations, we are looking for your input on how to restructure the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program and Native Entity Grant Program.

15  
00:02:57.930 --> 00:03:21.270

Arielle Roth: What are the broadband needs of your community? How can these federal programs advance or amplify other funding programs, including commitments you have received from BEAD? Your insights will guide us in the creation of our next Notice of Funding Opportunities as we structure these programs to better serve your communities and reduce administrative burdens and red tape for Tribal governments. I encourage you to speak up.

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00:03:21.270 --> 00:03:23.980

Arielle Roth: Submit written comments and engage with our staff.

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00:03:24.180 --> 00:03:30.669

Arielle Roth: All of us at NTIA appreciate your dedication and commitment to advancing broadband in your communities.

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00:03:31.020 --> 00:03:37.290

Arielle Roth: I look forward to our continued partnership and the meaningful progress we will achieve together. Thank you.

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00:03:38.450 --> 00:03:55.779

Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you, Assistant Secretary Roth, for those opening remarks. Hello, everyone, and welcome to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) Tribal Consultation Session for the Tribal Broadband Connectivity and Native Entities Grant Program. My name is Margaret Gutierrez, and I appreciate you taking the time to join us today.

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00:03:56.170 --> 00:04:09.469

Margaret Gutierrez: The primary purpose of this session is to hear from elected Tribal leaders or their designee for input on the third round of the TBCP Grant Program and the Native Entities Grant Program funded through the Digital Equity Act of 2021 set aside for Native Entities.

21  
00:04:10.180 --> 00:04:27.519

Margaret Gutierrez: To start, I'll introduce myself and my colleague, the speakers for today's session. Again, my name is Margaret Gutierrez, I'm an enrolled member with the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, and I am Division Chief of the TBCP program. I'll

be joined by Angela Thi Bennett, who serves as Director of the Digital Equity Act of 2021.

22

00:04:27.700 --> 00:04:46.260

Margaret Gutierrez: Together, we'll highlight two of the major funding programs under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, or IIJA, and we'll provide an overview of the TBCP grant program, while Angela will provide an overview of Native Entities. We will detail the requirements for each program and share important considerations for Tribal communities applying for these programs. Let's get started.

23

00:04:46.630 --> 00:04:57.730

Margaret Gutierrez: First, we'll review the agenda for today's session. We begin today with a brief welcome to open our session. Next, we'll provide an overview of the TBCP Grant Program, followed by an overview of the Native Entities Grant Program.

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00:04:57.910 --> 00:05:02.819

Margaret Gutierrez: These sections will give a shared understanding of each program's purpose, goals, and requirements.

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00:05:02.920 --> 00:05:16.789

Margaret Gutierrez: After that, we'll move into our government-to-government dialogue, which is the core of today's discussion. During this time, we'll focus on several key topics, including program design and reform, alignment with the BEAD program, and ways to maximize impact and use of funds.

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00:05:16.860 --> 00:05:27.220

Margaret Gutierrez: We'll also discuss reducing administrative burden, technology advancements, broadband adoption challenges, and effective models and best practices. This portion will conclude with time for additional feedback.

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00:05:27.980 --> 00:05:37.720

Margaret Gutierrez: We'll then review next steps, outlining what comes after today's discussion, and how feedback will be used moving forward. We appreciate your time and participation, and we look forward to a productive conversation.

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00:05:38.280 --> 00:05:41.170

Margaret Gutierrez: Now, let's review the current grant programs under IIJA.

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00:05:42.710 --> 00:05:57.729

Margaret Gutierrez: This slide provides a high-level overview of key Tribal broadband opportunities established through IIJA. Collectively, IIJA created several major grant programs that significantly expanded resources available to Tribal nations and Native Entities to improve broadband connectivity across Indian Country.

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00:05:57.920 --> 00:06:00.659

Margaret Gutierrez: First is the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program.

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00:06:00.760 --> 00:06:04.460

Margaret Gutierrez: This program was expanded through IIJA in December of 2021.

32  
00:06:04.470 --> 00:06:16.170  
Margaret Gutierrez: TBCP provides grants to expand both access to and adoption of broadband services on Tribal lands. Eligible uses include infrastructure deployment, remote learning, telework, and telehealth resources.

33  
00:06:16.170 --> 00:06:27.339  
Margaret Gutierrez: In total, TBCP represents \$3 billion in funding, \$1 billion originally provided through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, or CAA, and an additional \$2 billion provided through IIJA.

34  
00:06:27.700 --> 00:06:30.160  
Margaret Gutierrez: Second is the Native Entities Grant Program.

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00:06:30.540 --> 00:06:42.489  
Margaret Gutierrez: Established under the Digital Equity Act. This program is designed specifically to support Indian Tribes, Alaska Native Entities, and Native Hawaiian organizations in addressing broadband issues and use and adoption challenges.

36  
00:06:42.590 --> 00:06:50.770  
Margaret Gutierrez: The focus here extends beyond infrastructure to include digital skills, affordability, and community-driven solutions that meet the unique needs of Native communities.

37  
00:06:51.040 --> 00:07:02.190  
Margaret Gutierrez: Finally, the BEAD program, or Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program, provides \$42.45 billion nationwide for broadband planning, deployment, mapping, equity, and adoption activities.

38  
00:07:02.360 --> 00:07:14.510  
Margaret Gutierrez: While BEAD funding flows through states and territories, including the District of Columbia, it represents a major opportunity for Tribal engagement, coordination, and partnership to ensure Tribal needs are reflected in statewide broadband efforts.

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00:07:14.700 --> 00:07:22.850  
Margaret Gutierrez: Together, these programs form the core federal investment framework supporting broadband connectivity, digital equity, and economic opportunity in Tribal communities.

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00:07:23.010 --> 00:07:28.649  
Margaret Gutierrez: The next few slides will give us a detailed overview of the requirements of the TBCP and Native Entities Grant Program.

41  
00:07:30.570 --> 00:07:33.400  
Margaret Gutierrez: First, we'll review the TBCP grant program.

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00:07:34.810 --> 00:07:45.110

Margaret Gutierrez: This slide outlines who is eligible to apply under TBCP, as defined in the statute. Section 905(a)(8) under CAA specifies a broad set of Tribal serving entities.

43  
00:07:45.110 --> 00:07:58.159

Margaret Gutierrez: These include Tribal governments and Tribal colleges and universities, as well as Tribal organizations. Eligibility also extends to the Department of Hawaiian Homelands when applying on behalf of the Native Hawaiian community, including Native Hawaiian education programs.

44  
00:07:58.310 --> 00:08:12.160

Margaret Gutierrez: Finally, Alaska Native corporations, as defined under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, are also eligible. Together, these categories are intended to ensure flexibility and inclusive access for Tribal and Native communities seeking to expand broadband connectivity.

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00:08:12.940 --> 00:08:15.139

Margaret Gutierrez: Now let's move on to eligible lands.

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00:08:15.280 --> 00:08:28.089

Margaret Gutierrez: Eligible lands include and are defined by Section 905(A)(13) of the Act as any land located within the boundaries of an Indian reservation, pueblo or rancharia, or a former reservation within Oklahoma.

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00:08:28.520 --> 00:08:46.670

Margaret Gutierrez: Any land not located within the boundaries of an Indian reservation, Pueblo, or rancharia, to the title to which is held in trust by the United States for the benefit of an Indian Tribe or an individual Indian, by an Indian Tribe or an individual Indian subject to restriction against alienation under laws of the United States, or by a dependent Indian community.

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00:08:47.300 --> 00:08:53.519

Margaret Gutierrez: Any land located within a region established pursuant to Section 7A of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

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00:08:54.170 --> 00:09:01.029

Margaret Gutierrez: Hawaiian homelands, as defined in Section 801 of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996,

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00:09:01.040 --> 00:09:14.639

Margaret Gutierrez: or those areas or communities designated by the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs of the Department of the Interior that are near adjacent or contiguous to reservations where the financial assistance and social service programs are provided to Indians because of their status as Indians.

51  
00:09:18.200 --> 00:09:35.060

Margaret Gutierrez: In terms of eligible uses, TBCP grant funds may support broadband infrastructure deployment, such as building and supporting carrier-neutral submarine cable landing stations, as well as affordable broadband programs, including providing free or reduced-cost service and preventing the disconnection of existing broadband service.

52

00:09:35.300 --> 00:09:47.420

Margaret Gutierrez: In addition, eligible uses extend to distance learning, telehealth, digital inclusion efforts, and broadband adoption activities. It's important to note that no more than 2% of the grant funds may be used for administrative purposes.

53

00:09:47.580 --> 00:09:57.279

Margaret Gutierrez: There are also requirements around equitable distribution. Grant funds are awarded on an equitable basis to eligible entities, and at least 3% of total funding is set aside for the benefit of Native Hawaiians.

54

00:09:58.030 --> 00:10:12.880

Margaret Gutierrez: Finally, there are clear timelines for committing and spending the funds. Eligible entities must commit their grant funds within 180 days of receipt in line with their approved application, and the funds must be spent within 4 years unless an extension is granted by the Assistant Secretary under specific guidelines.

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00:10:12.900 --> 00:10:18.870

Margaret Gutierrez: Overall, these requirements are intended to support effective use of funds, ensure equity, and promote timely deployment.

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00:10:18.980 --> 00:10:23.469

Margaret Gutierrez: Now, I will pass it over to Angela to provide an overview on the Native Entities Grant Program.

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00:10:24.110 --> 00:10:39.389

Angela Thi Bennett: Thank you, Margaret. Hello, everyone. As Margaret mentioned earlier, my name is Angela Thi Bennett, and I serve as the Director of the Digital Equity Act of 2021 grant programs. I'm pleased to be here with you today.

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00:10:39.800 --> 00:10:45.240

Angela Thi Bennett: With that, I'll turn to an overview of the Native Entities Grant Program.

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00:10:48.800 --> 00:11:01.240

Angela Thi Bennett: The Digital Equity Act of 2021 includes specific set-asides of funding for the Native Entities Grant Program within two major grant programs administered by NTIA.

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00:11:01.430 --> 00:11:08.259

Angela Thi Bennett: the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program, and the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program.

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00:11:09.100 --> 00:11:28.739

Angela Thi Bennett: Under the Capacity Grant Program, the statute requires that not less than 5% of funds be used to award grants or enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with Indian Tribes, Alaska Native Entities, and Native Hawaiian organizations to carry out eligible activities.

62  
00:11:29.060 --> 00:11:32.869  
Angela Thi Bennett: Similarly, under the Competitive Grant Program.

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00:11:33.110 --> 00:11:41.799  
Angela Thi Bennett: The statute establishes a 5% set-aside for grants or agreements with these same Tribal and Native Entities.

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00:11:42.430 --> 00:11:58.169  
Angela Thi Bennett: Together, these set-asides ensure that Native communities have direct access to funding to advance broadband adoption, digital skills development, and access to devices and public connectivity resources.

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00:12:02.080 --> 00:12:04.270  
Angela Thi Bennett: Now, let's review eligibility.

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00:12:04.490 --> 00:12:16.019  
Angela Thi Bennett: NTIA uses the term Native Entities to collectively refer to Indian Tribes, Alaska Native Entities, and Native Hawaiian organizations.

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00:12:16.380 --> 00:12:25.449  
Angela Thi Bennett: Eligibility is determined using established federal and state sources to ensure consistency and transparency.

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00:12:25.870 --> 00:12:31.439  
Angela Thi Bennett: These sources include the Bureau of Indian Affairs' list of federally recognized Tribes.

69  
00:12:31.470 --> 00:12:49.789  
Angela Thi Bennett: Alaska's Index of Regional Native Corporations, and several lists maintained by the Department of the Interior related to Native Hawaiian organizations, including Homestead and Beneficiary associations, and the Department of Hawaiian Homelands.

70  
00:12:50.400 --> 00:13:01.889  
Angela Thi Bennett: Relying on these official sources helps provide clarity for applicants and ensures eligibility determinations are grounded in recognized authorities.

71  
00:13:06.070 --> 00:13:11.870  
Angela Thi Bennett: Let's move on to eligible uses of funds under the Native Entities Grant Program.

72  
00:13:12.420 --> 00:13:21.649  
Angela Thi Bennett: Under the Competitive Grant Program, the statute allows funds to be used for a broad range of broadband use and adoption activities.

73  
00:13:21.660 --> 00:13:32.529

Angela Thi Bennett: These include supporting broadband adoption tied to education and employment, implementing training programs that cover basic, advanced, and applied skills.

74  
00:13:32.580 --> 00:13:35.770  
Angela Thi Bennett: or delivering workforce development programs.

75  
00:13:35.960 --> 00:13:55.230  
Angela Thi Bennett: Funds may also be used to provide low- or no-cost equipment, software, and networking technology to support public access computing centers through community anchor institutions, and to carry out other activities the Assistant Secretary determines are consistent with the program's purpose.

76  
00:13:56.640 --> 00:14:05.060  
Angela Thi Bennett: Under the Capacity Grant Program, eligible uses focus on supporting a state's digital equity plan.

77  
00:14:05.230 --> 00:14:15.060  
Angela Thi Bennett: This includes assisting with plan implementation, advancing identified digital inclusion activities, and reporting back to the state on progress.

78  
00:14:15.070 --> 00:14:31.929  
Angela Thi Bennett: Across both programs, permitted activities are those that promote economic stability, access to education and healthcare, social and civic engagement, and community access to essential digital services.

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00:14:35.260 --> 00:14:48.489  
Angela Thi Bennett: As we move into open dialogue, we welcome Tribal governments to share their experiences, insights, and recommendations in ways that can meaningfully influence how these programs move forward.

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00:14:48.700 --> 00:14:53.430  
Angela Thi Bennett: And now I will pass it to Margaret to begin the dialogue. Thank you.

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00:14:54.740 --> 00:15:08.300  
Margaret Gutierrez: Before reviewing the topics for today, we'd like to go over some housekeeping items. We've opened this session as listen-only mode to cut down on background noise. In this session, we will ask elected Tribal leaders or their designees to use the raise your hand function to have the opportunity to speak.

82  
00:15:08.520 --> 00:15:14.069  
Margaret Gutierrez: I, or a member of my team, will unmute you when it is your turn, so that you can ask your questions during the session.

83  
00:15:14.210 --> 00:15:24.449  
Margaret Gutierrez: There will also be time for Tribal leaders who are on audio only to be able to participate in the discussion. During that discussion, we will have to unmute all lines, and individuals will need to press star 6.

84  
00:15:24.590 --> 00:15:29.369  
Margaret Gutierrez: Lastly, NTIA is also accepting and very much encouraging written comments.

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00:15:29.480 --> 00:15:43.489  
Margaret Gutierrez: Written comments can be submitted to [BroadbandUSA@ntia.gov](mailto:BroadbandUSA@ntia.gov), with the subject line, Tribal Broadband Connectivity Grant Program, Native Entities Grant Program, by February 13, 2026, at 6 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

86  
00:15:43.810 --> 00:15:49.789  
Margaret Gutierrez: These instructions are also listed at the end of this PowerPoint deck, which will be available for download on the [BroadbandUSA](https://www.broadbandusa.gov) website.

87  
00:15:50.490 --> 00:15:59.130  
Margaret Gutierrez: We look forward to your comments on the TBCP and Native Entities Grant Program to continue learning how we can work together to solve broadband access challenges in Indian Country.

88  
00:15:59.510 --> 00:16:13.529  
Margaret Gutierrez: Additionally, please note that this is not an open meeting. Tribal consultations are off-record and not for press purposes. We ask that any press who are on the line please disconnect now, to ensure Tribal leaders and stakeholders have the opportunity to participate.

89  
00:16:13.900 --> 00:16:26.729  
Margaret Gutierrez: Now let's review the topics for today's consultation. The topics on this slide are intended to serve as guiding themes for our consultation today. These topics are intended to organize feedback and ensure we are hearing from Tribal leaders on the areas that matter most.

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00:16:27.450 --> 00:16:37.770  
Margaret Gutierrez: First, we'll touch on program design and reform, including what is working well within the TBCP and Native Entities Grant Programs, and where adjustments could better support Tribal priorities and sovereignty.

91  
00:16:37.950 --> 00:16:47.609  
Margaret Gutierrez: We'll also discuss alignment with BEAD, particularly how these programs can be complementary, coordinated, and non-duplicative, while continuing to address the unique needs of Tribal communities.

92  
00:16:47.780 --> 00:16:58.840  
Margaret Gutierrez: Another key focus is maximizing impact and use of funds. Our resources can be structured and deployed in ways that stretch dollars further and deliver meaningful, long-term connectivity outcomes on Tribal lands.

93  
00:16:58.940 --> 00:17:09.850  
Margaret Gutierrez: We want to hear candid feedback on administrative burden, including challenges related to application, reporting, compliance, and overall program administration, and where processes could be streamlined or improved.

94  
00:17:10.540 --> 00:17:21.560  
Margaret Gutierrez: We'll also invite discussion around technology advancements, including how emerging and evolving technologies, such as fixed wireless and low Earth orbit satellite, are impacting connectivity options in Indian Country.

95  
00:17:21.760 --> 00:17:32.390  
Margaret Gutierrez: Relatedly, we'll explore broadband adoption challenges, recognizing that access alone does not always translate to adoption, and that affordability, digital skills, and community-specific barriers play an important role.

96  
00:17:32.630 --> 00:17:42.159  
Margaret Gutierrez: We're also interested in learning about effective models and best practices, whether public, private, or public-private, that Tribes have found successful in advancing broadband access and adoption.

97  
00:17:42.430 --> 00:17:52.950  
Margaret Gutierrez: Finally, we will leave space for additional feedback. If there are perspectives, experiences, or recommendations that do not fit neatly into these categories, we want to ensure there is room for those voices to be heard.

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00:17:53.190 --> 00:17:59.289  
Margaret Gutierrez: We appreciate your willingness to engage in this dialogue and look forward to learning from your insights to help inform future program improvements.

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00:17:59.430 --> 00:18:06.569  
Margaret Gutierrez: For record keeping, when providing feedback and responses, please provide your name, your title, and the Tribal government you are representing.

100  
00:18:30.260 --> 00:18:36.290  
Margaret Gutierrez: We'll begin today by walking through a set of program design and reform topics that will help frame today's government-to-government dialogue.

101  
00:18:36.330 --> 00:18:49.039  
Margaret Gutierrez: Since the initial TBCP1 NOFO was issued in 2021, followed by the second TBCP NOFO in 2023, and the Native Entity's NOFOs in 2024, the broadband landscape has evolved significantly.

102  
00:18:49.040 --> 00:18:56.890  
Margaret Gutierrez: Deployment has progressed in many areas. Technologies have advanced, and additional federal and state funding sources, such as the BEAD program, are now underway.

103  
00:18:57.070 --> 00:19:07.639  
Margaret Gutierrez: In light of these developments, NTIA is taking a step back to assess how remaining unobligated TBCP and Native Entity funds can be used in the most effective and appropriate way moving forward.

104

00:19:08.220 --> 00:19:21.749

Margaret Gutierrez: As part of that effort, NTIA is seeking direct input from Tribal leaders on how these programs can be refined or potentially redesigned to better reflect current conditions and more effectively meet the unique connectivity needs, priorities, and circumstances of Tribal communities.

105

00:19:21.750 --> 00:19:34.180

Margaret Gutierrez: This includes considering whether elements such as program structure, eligible activities, funding approaches, or implementation timelines could be adjusted to better support Tribal sovereignty, local decision-making, and long-term sustainability.

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00:19:34.180 --> 00:19:43.029

Margaret Gutierrez: To help guide today's consultation, we will present a set of discussion topics and questions. These are intended to frame the conversation and provide context for the dialogue that will follow.

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00:19:43.530 --> 00:19:49.389

Margaret Gutierrez: As we address each theme, we will open the floor for an open discussion, where we invite Tribal leaders to share perspectives,

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00:19:49.470 --> 00:20:04.419

Margaret Gutierrez: recommendations and lessons learned, both from what has worked well and what challenges you've encountered. Your feedback will help inform NTIA's consideration of potential future program improvements. Before we proceed to the first discussion, please note that this is not an open meeting.

109

00:20:04.420 --> 00:20:13.839

Margaret Gutierrez: Tribal consultations are off-record and not for press purposes. We ask that any press, or those who do not have permission to speak on behalf of a Tribal government, please disconnect now.

110

00:20:13.930 --> 00:20:25.549

Margaret Gutierrez: To ensure Tribal leaders and their designees have the opportunity to participate, for a record keeping when providing feedback and responses, please provide your name, your title, and the Tribal government you are representing.

111

00:20:25.550 --> 00:20:34.499

Margaret Gutierrez: With that, we'll move into the first discussion. The first question is, how can NTIA reform its TBCP and Native Entity Grant Program to better serve Tribal connectivity?

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00:20:37.510 --> 00:20:40.339

Julia Pulidindi: Our first speaker is Chairman Tehassi Hill.

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00:20:41.710 --> 00:20:42.930

Margaret Gutierrez: Chairman, go ahead.

114

00:20:44.710 --> 00:20:49.169

Chairman Tehassi Hill: Yes, thank you, Chairman Tehassi-Hill, Oneida Nation, Wisconsin.

Commented [KJ1]: Verified

115  
00:20:49.550 --> 00:21:00.870  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: Oneida Nation is located near the City of Green Bay, Wisconsin, crossed by two counties, 6 municipal governments. Our Tribal membership totals are over 17,200.

116  
00:21:01.020 --> 00:21:08.939  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: Oneida is a self-governance Tribe with a compact with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health, and Department of Transportation.

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00:21:09.300 --> 00:21:13.700  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: as our comments related to the, I guess, the question asked,

118  
00:21:13.940 --> 00:21:30.169  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: By developing a deeper understanding of the needs of our various Tribal communities, we can better allocate resources and plan effectively. Oneida Nation includes both metropolitan and rural areas, and the appropriate use of grant funding depends on the specific requirements in each region.

119  
00:21:30.290 --> 00:21:43.910  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: Due to the geographic spread of the rural area, available funds do not always cover the full cost of the project, particularly when considering the materials and labor required to install essential fiber infrastructure.

120  
00:21:49.180 --> 00:21:50.010  
Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you.

121  
00:21:50.230 --> 00:21:50.830  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: Thank you.

122  
00:21:54.250 --> 00:21:56.580  
Julia Pulidindi: We do not have anyone else waiting

123  
00:21:57.380 --> 00:21:58.999  
Julia Pulidindi: in the queue to provide a comment.

124  
00:22:03.770 --> 00:22:05.160  
Margaret Gutierrez: You see one more hand?

125  
00:22:05.280 --> 00:22:07.140  
Julia Pulidindi: Oh, I'm sorry about that.

126  
00:22:08.230 --> 00:22:08.920  
Julia Pulidindi: Right?

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00:22:09.230 --> 00:22:10.850  
Julia Pulidindi: Lance Browder.

128  
00:22:14.000 --> 00:22:14.690  
Lance Browder: Yes.

129  
00:22:15.080 --> 00:22:21.050  
Lance Browder: This is Lance Browder. I'm the Senior Tribal Broadband Officer with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

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00:22:21.510 --> 00:22:39.820  
Lance Browder: I speak today from the perspective, obviously, of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, where we operate Chahta Connect. It's our Tribal broadband network, and like many Tribes, we're preparing for BEAD to kind of close that final access and those last mile gaps across our communities, because BEAD is, in many respects, the final

131  
00:22:39.870 --> 00:22:44.130  
Lance Browder: effort to achieve that universal broadband availability, but

132  
00:22:44.160 --> 00:22:46.700  
Lance Browder: access is not the end state.

133  
00:22:46.730 --> 00:23:04.729  
Lance Browder: And that's where this program design and reform, I believe, can come in. Because, really, the critical question becomes whether the networks that were built with federal dollars will remain affordable, resilient, and sustainable 20 years from now, after all of the construction funding has ended. So,

134  
00:23:04.830 --> 00:23:09.810  
Lance Browder: The remaining TBCP and any funds could have their greatest impact

135  
00:23:10.000 --> 00:23:17.310  
Lance Browder: If they invest in interconnection, resilience, and cost control,

136  
00:23:17.310 --> 00:23:31.959  
Lance Browder: So, if the NTIA specifically, the NTIA should consider positioning these programs to support regional Tribal interconnection, middle-mile aggregation, and rural internet exchange points.

137  
00:23:32.060 --> 00:23:38.350  
Lance Browder: Because for travel networks, the longest long-term cost drivers, not the last mile, is transport.

138  
00:23:38.350 --> 00:23:52.279  
Lance Browder: And so, hauling traffic to distant metro markets drives up costs year after year and directly impacts that affordability and adoption. And so, regional IXPs, and specifically Tribal IXPs

Commented [KJ2]: Verified

Commented [TA3]: Confirm correct spelling of word "Chata" or "Chotta". "Chotta is listed in the recording.

Commented [YE4R3]: Chahta per tribe's website <https://www.choctawnation.com/services/chahta-connect/>

139  
00:23:52.760 --> 00:23:59.960  
Lance Browder: could reduce those costs by keeping that traffic local, improving our latency, and strengthening our resilience, which

140  
00:23:59.990 --> 00:24:14.669  
Lance Browder: obviously, you know, lower transport costs equals lower monthly costs to our subscribers, and that lower cost or barrier to entry is going to increase adoption overall.

141  
00:24:14.750 --> 00:24:30.780  
Lance Browder: And so I respectfully, ask that NTIA, consider these future, funding rounds to definitely focus on, on this regional Tribal interconnection, middle-mile aggregation, and internet exchange points.

142  
00:24:30.920 --> 00:24:31.739  
Lance Browder: Thank you.

143  
00:24:32.880 --> 00:24:34.589  
Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you, Lance, for your comments.

144  
00:24:35.140 --> 00:24:49.950  
Isabel Lopez: Thank you, Lance. Quick question. It sounds like you guys have been tracking the transport costs for a while. Do you have any examples of the change in those costs since the introduction of TBCP?

145  
00:24:52.500 --> 00:24:54.490  
Lance Browder: Is that question directed back to me, I'm assuming?

146  
00:24:54.490 --> 00:24:55.190  
Isabel Lopez: Yes.

147  
00:24:55.800 --> 00:25:01.000  
Lance Browder: So, no, we just recently, began our

148  
00:25:01.010 --> 00:25:13.299  
Lance Browder: I guess our first network. So we're about 3 months in with having subscribers on it. However, all of our traffic is having to be routed, down into Texas, most of it.

149  
00:25:13.300 --> 00:25:23.390  
Lance Browder: We do have one other, one other route that could go back to Oklahoma City, but our, our primary route is, is down in, down in Dallas.

150  
00:25:23.390 --> 00:25:35.020  
Lance Browder: And so, from where we exist in the southeastern quadrant of the state, there's really not any good, you know, aggregation or middle-mile routes for us whatsoever.

151  
00:25:35.080 --> 00:25:44.120  
Lance Browder: And so, as of today, I do not have that data or how those costs, are going to impact us in the long run.

152  
00:25:44.120 --> 00:25:59.700  
Lance Browder: However, but I do expect us to have a significantly higher transport, in in aggregation cost, rather than if we were able to aggregate that here locally within our territory.

153  
00:26:01.080 --> 00:26:02.069  
Isabel Lopez: Thank you, Lance.

154  
00:26:10.290 --> 00:26:13.030  
Julia Pulidindi: Our next speaker is Godfrey Enjady.

155  
00:26:16.340 --> 00:26:17.209  
Margaret Gutierrez: Go ahead, Godfrey.

156  
00:26:17.210 --> 00:26:18.199  
Godfrey Enjady: Great, hello.

157  
00:26:18.310 --> 00:26:27.169  
Godfrey Enjady: My name is Godfrey Enjady, I'm the General Manager for Mescalero Apache Telecom, also the Broadband and Telecommunications Director for the Mescalero Apache Tribe.

158  
00:26:27.400 --> 00:26:35.819  
Godfrey Enjady: In that, I thank, NTIA for actually putting this program together, and, getting,

159  
00:26:36.390 --> 00:26:40.800  
Godfrey Enjady: the information out that we need to make sure that we make, good decisions.

160  
00:26:41.010 --> 00:26:44.940  
Godfrey Enjady: On building broadband networks for our Tribal nations.

161  
00:26:45.240 --> 00:26:47.400  
Godfrey Enjady: Now, in the reforms that we have.

162  
00:26:47.780 --> 00:26:53.740  
Godfrey Enjady: I've come back from the point to where I was part of the digital divide.

163  
00:26:53.850 --> 00:27:01.199  
Godfrey Enjady: Back when we were just trying to get dial tone to homes, to be able to have voice, being able to call 911 services. So, since that time til now

Commented [KJ5]: Verified

164  
00:27:01.620 --> 00:27:06.919  
Godfrey Enjady: Broadband has become part of that to where it is a necessity for Tribes.

165  
00:27:07.070 --> 00:27:14.159  
Godfrey Enjady: That's why I believe, in my part, that the funding that we were supposed to receive, the \$3 billion.

166  
00:27:14.700 --> 00:27:20.470  
Godfrey Enjady: Doesn't need to be reformed, but all Tribes should be able to get access to all the funding that they are promised.

167  
00:27:20.600 --> 00:27:32.440  
Godfrey Enjady: It is part of what was given to us in the first place, so I don't think we need to try to look at how to reduce costs, but how to build the best networks using the best technology.

168  
00:27:32.640 --> 00:27:36.239  
Godfrey Enjady: And if we start looking at how we can achieve that.

169  
00:27:36.510 --> 00:27:40.359  
Godfrey Enjady: Being able to have access for the last mile for homes,

170  
00:27:40.620 --> 00:27:45.300  
Godfrey Enjady: building a, network for connectivity for Middle Mile,

171  
00:27:45.400 --> 00:27:47.929  
Godfrey Enjady: Getting to the to a market.

172  
00:27:48.390 --> 00:27:56.790  
Godfrey Enjady: Just like the gentleman before that was speaking about how costs were high, being able to get that cost lowered in some fashion, some way, somehow.

173  
00:27:56.930 --> 00:27:59.459  
Godfrey Enjady: But to exert

174  
00:27:59.820 --> 00:28:09.839  
Godfrey Enjady: the ability to have the knowledge to know that. This is a new field for Tribes. A lot of Tribes have not gone down this road of building broadband. We've always been

175  
00:28:12.290 --> 00:28:18.740  
Godfrey Enjady: looking to providers to be able to do that for us, and I'm so sorry to say, they have not done such a great job.

176  
00:28:18.910 --> 00:28:27.059

Godfrey Enjady: Jobs to where we're trying to do everything we can to provide the services. We need to look at advanced services as we start looking at

177  
00:28:27.070 --> 00:28:42.190  
Godfrey Enjady: now that we have broadband, what do we do with it? Are we looking at AI services and everything else? So, again, all the funding that is promised us to us at the very beginning needs to be used on Tribal lands and being able to move that forward. So, that's the end of my comments. Thank you.

178  
00:28:45.850 --> 00:28:47.060  
Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you, Godfrey.

179  
00:28:48.390 --> 00:28:50.710  
Margaret Gutierrez: I don't see any other hands, Julia.

180  
00:28:52.190 --> 00:28:53.030  
Angela Thi Bennett: Okay.

181  
00:28:54.020 --> 00:28:55.519  
Margaret Gutierrez: Oh, I see one more.

182  
00:29:00.310 --> 00:29:03.930  
Julia Pulidindi: Next speaker is Rain Felkl.

183  
00:29:03.930 --> 00:29:09.900  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Oh, hey, this is Chris Cropley, Rain's boss. I took her link because mine wasn't working, I apologize.

Commented [KJ6]: Rain, not Raine

184  
00:29:10.720 --> 00:29:18.609  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Also, I'm coming in a little late, so I'll ask for some grace if this is not the right time to speak, but

185  
00:29:18.920 --> 00:29:31.550  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): We all know how Mondays go. So, Chris Cropley, speaking for Tlingit and Haida, Central Council Indian Tribes of Alaska, we are were awarded an infrastructure grant on a Tribal broadband connectivity program

Commented [KJ7]: Verified

186  
00:29:31.700 --> 00:29:37.010  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): One and Put my hand down here.

187  
00:29:39.120 --> 00:29:43.939  
Margaret Gutierrez: I was asked Chris, really quickly, could you, give us your title, please?

188  
00:29:44.150 --> 00:29:46.859  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Director of, of, Broadband.

189

00:29:46.860 --> 00:29:47.899

Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you so much.

190

00:29:49.630 --> 00:29:59.079

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): So, thank you guys. I did attend the full meeting last week, and really appreciate everybody over there, and appreciate the Tribal consultation, and

191

00:29:59.390 --> 00:30:06.140

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): I think you guys are doing a great job, and listen to all the comments from fellow Tribal leaders and representatives.

192

00:30:06.790 --> 00:30:23.700

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And I really appreciate and understand the challenges that we're all facing here, that, you know, here in Indian Country, things are very different. Things in southeast Alaska, where we are building service out, is an archipelago, not connected by the road.

193

00:30:23.940 --> 00:30:27.680

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): It's actually easier for have people fly into Anchorage from

194

00:30:27.860 --> 00:30:30.429

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): North Dakota than it is Petersburg.

195

00:30:30.790 --> 00:30:37.739

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And we don't necessarily have fiber in all these locations, and

196

00:30:39.090 --> 00:30:43.019

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Boy, we were, like I said, awarded and won in November.

197

00:30:43.690 --> 00:30:59.590

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): We've been going gangbusters on that. We've been buying property. We've been, you know, in Alaska, we don't have a reservation system here. We Tlingit and Haida, don't own land in a lot of these communities, and we're having to buy it from,

198

00:31:00.990 --> 00:31:02.600

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Private sellers.

199

00:31:03.040 --> 00:31:09.969

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And It, we have local Tribes we are working with, and they're not always

200

00:31:10.080 --> 00:31:24.620

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): keen to have us buying property there, so we're working in partnership there, which requires a lot of community outreach, and I guess my point there is that Tribal politics, are complicated, and I don't think anybody

201

00:31:24.810 --> 00:31:27.130

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Here, on this call would

202

00:31:27.840 --> 00:31:31.780

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Would disagree with that, and certainly have their own examples of that.

203

00:31:32.370 --> 00:31:36.660

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And the drawout of that is a couple things. One,

204

00:31:38.910 --> 00:31:47.730

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): we need more time, and so I'm going to bring that up. And we see this opportunity for Tribal Broadband Connectivity 3 to

205

00:31:48.160 --> 00:31:51.210

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): To help support the investment that

206

00:31:51.620 --> 00:31:56.199

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): America has already made into bringing broadband to the unserved and underserved.

207

00:31:56.450 --> 00:31:59.730

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And to see that the, the NOFO

208

00:31:59.980 --> 00:32:06.439

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): feed into supporting the existing programs, and I'm just gonna really zoom in that,

209

00:32:06.800 --> 00:32:17.730

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): you know, sustainability, sustainability, sustainability, we all talk about what that is. I think if we all sat down and wrote out what we believed sustainability was, we may all have different

210

00:32:18.030 --> 00:32:21.450

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): definitions of that. And so I just want to make

211

00:32:21.670 --> 00:32:33.309

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): crystal clear, when I say sustainability, I'm talking about Operation and, operational funding from the Fed.

212

00:32:33.590 --> 00:32:38.580

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Just like we see with the carriers, up here with the Alaska plan.

213  
00:32:38.630 --> 00:32:58.429  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): or Alaska Connect, or whatever we're calling it these days. You know, we see the 5G plan down south, and E-Rate, and RDOF, and all these other fund programs. Now, you know, nothing one of our top priorities is to avoid duplication, and I think we all do a great job of staying on top of that.

214  
00:32:58.440 --> 00:33:01.080  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And I think it's worth the time and the effort.

215  
00:33:01.950 --> 00:33:20.389  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): But again, I think if we were to all write our own definition of deduplication, you know, supporting a program, you know, if a carrier, a hypothetical carrier gets USDA money to build fiber, and then they get E-rate money to go sell internet to the schools, that's not duplication.

216  
00:33:21.010 --> 00:33:25.980  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And happy to take that argument offline. But the,

217  
00:33:27.580 --> 00:33:32.129  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): the opportunity to support the investments to, instead of just

218  
00:33:32.440 --> 00:33:43.040  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): handing out a one-time quick-shot solution that expires in 5 years, or 10 years, or whatever it is. That sustainability piece to

219  
00:33:43.180 --> 00:33:49.680  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): create I won't say infinite, but long-term,

220  
00:33:49.820 --> 00:33:53.690  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): programs in Indian Country where instead of

221  
00:33:54.250 --> 00:34:05.830  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): paying to upgrade folks, with, me, who lives in a big city, it's nice, where I get faster and faster internet every year, but we have folks that have no internet, and so getting them

222  
00:34:06.860 --> 00:34:10.729  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): permanent internet, even if it's 25 by 3,

223  
00:34:11.210 --> 00:34:17.629  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): It's better than getting somebody from 1GB to 2GB, or 100 to 1 gig.

224  
00:34:17.960 --> 00:34:22.139  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): So the that, that is my sustainability,

225

00:34:23.130 --> 00:34:28.009

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): rant and more time. So, see, see, this is an opportunity to

226

00:34:30.370 --> 00:34:37.509

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): support the programs that we've all really invested years and years of our lives and millions of dollars into, so thank you.

227

00:34:38.300 --> 00:34:46.460

Angela Thi Bennett: I have a follow-up question. Earlier you talked about, you know, some of these challenges of,

228

00:34:46.650 --> 00:34:59.290

Angela Thi Bennett: you know, buying land, and you talked about Tribal politics being complicated, and you referenced needing more time. Can you kind of clarify what you mean by need more time around what areas?

229

00:35:00.160 --> 00:35:09.009

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): So, yeah, and specifically asking, you know, we're working on a no-cost extension. Being Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program 1, we're running out of time.

230

00:35:09.070 --> 00:35:21.420

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): We've got a great system in place to buy and to build, and you know, we get our environmental and geotech and shipping and towers, and all the fun things that go along with that.

231

00:35:21.510 --> 00:35:38.269

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And so that, that is, asking for more time on, certainly, for our no-cost extension on, on TBCP1, but certainly take into consideration, I mean, let's face it, I think if we were all very honest with ourselves four years ago, as optimistic and

232

00:35:38.390 --> 00:35:42.569

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And, and, as optimistic as we were.

233

00:35:43.260 --> 00:35:50.150

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): the four years is a tough bite, and I understand some of that is, you know, not our decision.

234

00:35:50.290 --> 00:36:05.859

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And, I mean, just like the 2%, right? I mean, that's not super popular, but that's all statutory and that sort of thing, and there's no coming off that. So, I think as we look back and we look forward, allowing enough timeline for these things, certainly in

235

00:36:07.180 --> 00:36:19.329

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): communities that don't have baseline infrastructure. We had a situation in one of our communities. The port where we bring the equipment to couldn't support the crane.

236  
00:36:19.830 --> 00:36:28.190  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): to stand up the equipment, and we had to find an alternative. And so, you know, that's maybe not something that we would have in

237  
00:36:28.550 --> 00:36:34.240  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Another community that does have bridge, road, port].

238  
00:36:34.700 --> 00:36:47.409  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): what's the program that when they run a new road and they run fiber through it, right? I mean, we don't have that in these communities. We don't even have, you know, finished roads in a lot of these places, so

239  
00:36:47.650 --> 00:36:53.519  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): The amount of time I think, that it takes, I know that it takes to do these projects

240  
00:36:53.680 --> 00:37:06.540  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): let's say off-grid or in remote Indian country is, greater than we would expect in, say, a more metropolitan or more populated

241  
00:37:06.650 --> 00:37:09.710  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): more, I hate to say, developed, location.

242  
00:37:11.350 --> 00:37:15.950  
Angela Thi Bennett: Okay, thank you. So, like, the implementation time period, that period of performance, got it.

243  
00:37:15.950 --> 00:37:19.109  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Yeah, yeah, yeah, okay. Yeah, long answer there, you were just asking.

244  
00:37:19.110 --> 00:37:27.470  
Angela Thi Bennett: No, that's okay, you provided additional details, right, to give context to the challenges you're experiencing. So I appreciate that, thank you.

245  
00:37:31.170 --> 00:37:33.630  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Okay, more time, more money, thank you.

246  
00:37:41.360 --> 00:37:44.009  
Julia Pulidindi: We have Lance Browder again.

247  
00:37:47.550 --> 00:37:48.300  
Lance Browder: Yes.

248

Commented [TA8]: Unsure of what commentor said. The recording lists "Ridge, bro, port".

Commented [YE9R8]: I couldn't catch it either

Commented [KJ10R8]: I heard "bridge, road, port..."

00:37:48.850 --> 00:38:04.719

Lance Browder: So, just as a follow-up to Isabel's question from earlier, even though I do not have any direct data, just because our network is still in its infancy stages, there are numerous case studies

249  
00:38:04.720 --> 00:38:13.329  
Lance Browder: that have been done, regarding the cost reduction. And typically, you can, you can see anywhere from

250  
00:38:13.330 --> 00:38:31.779  
Lance Browder: generally a 40% to 60% reduction, for those regional providers, just in their, in their transit costs if, if they have an interior, you know, IXP versus having to, up, you know, send their transit upstream.

251  
00:38:37.500 --> 00:38:38.270  
Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you for that, Lance.

252  
00:38:38.270 --> 00:38:39.200  
Isabel Lopez: Thank you, Lance.

253  
00:38:44.600 --> 00:38:48.250  
Margaret Gutierrez: Alright, I think that's it on Topic 1, Julia. We can go to Topic 2.

254  
00:38:53.430 --> 00:39:06.570  
Angela Thi Bennett: Okay. All right, so next we'll turn to alignment with the BEAD program. So, as BEAD continues to roll out and accelerate nationwide, it has become the primary vehicle for large-scale broadband deployment.

255  
00:39:07.050 --> 00:39:17.820  
Angela Thi Bennett: At the same time, NTIA recognizes that the TBCP and Native Entities Grant Programs play a distinct and important role in supporting Tribal connectivity.

256  
00:39:18.550 --> 00:39:29.940  
Angela Thi Bennett: With that in mind, NTIA is considering how the TBCP and the Native Entities Grant Programs can be aligned with BEAD in ways that are complementary,

257  
00:39:29.940 --> 00:39:39.279  
Angela Thi Bennett: coordinated and non-duplicative, while still maintaining the flexibility needed to address Tribal-specific needs and priorities.

258  
00:39:39.800 --> 00:39:55.570  
Angela Thi Bennett: This includes how these programs may work together across planning, deployment, adoption, and sustainability activities, particularly in areas where BEAD may not fully address Tribal connectivity challenges.

259  
00:39:56.160 --> 00:40:15.570

Angela Thi Bennett: NTIA is also assessing what activities should be prioritized for TBCP and Native Entities funding as BEAD progresses, given the remaining broadband needs on Tribal lands and the time and structure of BEAD implementation at the state level.

260  
00:40:15.780 --> 00:40:19.820  
Angela Thi Bennett: So, to frame this dialogue, we posed two related questions.

261  
00:40:20.130 --> 00:40:32.119  
Angela Thi Bennett: How can NTIA adapt its TBCP and Native Entities Grant Programs to be aligned with, complementary to, and non-duplicative of BEAD

262  
00:40:32.480 --> 00:40:43.749  
Angela Thi Bennett: And given the current status and progress of BEAD, what activities should be the primary focus of TBCP and Native Entities moving forward?

263  
00:40:44.670 --> 00:40:46.339  
Angela Thi Bennett: And I see hands are up.

264  
00:40:46.770 --> 00:40:47.660  
Angela Thi Bennett: Julia?

265  
00:40:47.660 --> 00:40:50.520  
Julia Pulidindi: Yes, our first speaker is Chairman Tehassi Hill.

266  
00:40:52.180 --> 00:40:54.489  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: Yes, good afternoon again.

267  
00:40:55.260 --> 00:41:03.870  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: I guess all my nations comments to the questions. NTIA can best align with TBCP and any programs

268  
00:41:03.930 --> 00:41:16.600  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: with BEAD by proposing them as complementary tools that fill critical gaps BEAD is not designed to address, while avoiding overlap in last mile infrastructure deployment.

269  
00:41:16.640 --> 00:41:27.339  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: First, NTIA should clearly define program roles and boundaries. BEAD should remain the primary pupil for large-scale capital-intensive

270  
00:41:27.400 --> 00:41:31.700  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: broadband deployment, particularly last mile infrastructure.

271  
00:41:31.910 --> 00:41:48.390  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: In contrast, TBCP and NE should focus on enabling conditions, community readiness, and sustainable adoption, rather than duplicating construction activities that are already eligible for the BEAD funding.

272  
00:41:48.700 --> 00:41:56.079  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: Given the progress of the BEAD program, TBCP and NE program should prioritize the following activities.

273  
00:41:56.290 --> 00:41:58.990  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: Community planning and capacity building,

274  
00:41:59.350 --> 00:42:02.169  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: Digital equity and adoption efforts,

275  
00:42:02.410 --> 00:42:07.139  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: Middle mile and community anchor connectivity, where BEAD is not present,

276  
00:42:07.710 --> 00:42:10.750  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: Innovative and Tribal Land Solutions,

277  
00:42:10.950 --> 00:42:13.640  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: Technical assistance and coordination.

278  
00:42:14.200 --> 00:42:28.870  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: TBCP and NE should be aligned with the non-duplicative of BEAD by focusing on planning, community and Tribal capacity, digital equity, and adoption, targeting last middle mile.

279  
00:42:28.870 --> 00:42:36.840  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: and anchoring connectivity, and robust technical assistance, leaving large-scale, last-mile deployment principally to BEAD.

280  
00:42:36.950 --> 00:42:45.090  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: The structure would allow NTIA portfolio to function as an integrated system, builds the network, while TBCP

281  
00:42:45.640 --> 00:42:52.959  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: TBCP and NE ensure those networks are planned for, governed well, and meaningfully served. Thank you.

282  
00:42:55.860 --> 00:42:56.880  
Angela Thi Bennett: Thank you.

283  
00:43:20.270 --> 00:43:26.779  
Julia Pulidindi: And our next speaker is Rain Felkl, which I think is, Chris Cropley.

284  
00:43:31.540 --> 00:43:33.009  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Hello, can you hear me?

285  
00:43:33.010 --> 00:43:33.800  
Julia Pulidindi: Yes.

286  
00:43:33.800 --> 00:43:40.359  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): All right, yep, sorry about sorry about that. I might try to log in onto the other one, but until then, we'll just we'll just use Rain's.

Commented [KJ11]: Rain's

287  
00:43:40.530 --> 00:43:41.880  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): If that's acceptable.

288  
00:43:42.170 --> 00:43:47.390  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Just Quickly, I'll keep this one much shorter.

289  
00:43:47.740 --> 00:43:54.469  
Rain Felkl: the, we don't see BEAD supporting Tribes, I mean

Commented [YE12]: BEAD

290  
00:43:54.570 --> 00:44:05.180  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And I don't know if it was necessarily written to, and it certainly was rewritten to maybe take a step away from supporting Tribes, whether it's around the consultation,

291  
00:44:06.750 --> 00:44:10.429  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Lack of clarity, or really teeth in that, which

292  
00:44:12.550 --> 00:44:17.000  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): I'll leave that, as that. The,

293  
00:44:19.440 --> 00:44:25.089  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): It's very clearly written to support large, established carriers.

294  
00:44:25.530 --> 00:44:28.570  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): At least that's how we're seeing it executed

295  
00:44:29.140 --> 00:44:34.509  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): here in Alaska, and I think that one of the great things about

296  
00:44:34.860 --> 00:44:48.599  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): TBCP12345, whatever we're gonna do here, is that it is Tribal-centric and does fill a great need that is not being met by other programs.

297  
00:44:48.970 --> 00:44:58.939  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): So, it's, just to draw, an analogy, is if you look at the Alaska Plan,

298  
00:44:59.160 --> 00:45:07.049  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Versus the 5G plan. The 5G plan is for the lower 48, it's for 5G, and Alaska has its own.

299  
00:45:07.590 --> 00:45:15.450  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): There is a specific need and pain in Indian country for

300  
00:45:16.820 --> 00:45:22.720  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): broadband that is not being met by other programs, and TBCP,

301  
00:45:23.450 --> 00:45:27.669  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): does exactly that, so I don't see I don't see a lot of overlap.

302  
00:45:27.870 --> 00:45:37.949  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): I do see an opportunity, again, for, support, of each of TBCP3 doing an ACP

303  
00:45:38.190 --> 00:45:42.840  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Tribal ACP, or ACP, 2.0.

304  
00:45:43.660 --> 00:45:49.949  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): to support that infrastructure investment, and if you look at BEAD,

305  
00:45:50.530 --> 00:45:54.319  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And I know you guys have probably more than even I have.

306  
00:45:54.580 --> 00:45:56.870  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Let me turn off my beeper here.

307  
00:45:57.000 --> 00:45:58.480  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): The,

308  
00:46:01.960 --> 00:46:07.380  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): need of investment on that, the match, and

309  
00:46:07.550 --> 00:46:19.489  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): and some of the other requirements around high cost and low cost and that is a significant, burden, or burden's probably strong language, but,

310  
00:46:19.910 --> 00:46:21.060  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): requirements.

311  
00:46:21.270 --> 00:46:22.680  
Rain Felkl: For that funding.

312  
00:46:22.870 --> 00:46:29.650  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): It does make the spreadsheet harder, harder to zero, and I, I think we could, definitely see

313  
00:46:30.110 --> 00:46:36.039  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): that Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program bolstering BEAD, I don't see it competing, I don't see it overlapping.

314  
00:46:36.670 --> 00:46:40.070  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And, and again, I think we're all very, very

315  
00:46:41.280 --> 00:46:45.399  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): aware of the perils of duplication, and I don't

316  
00:46:45.900 --> 00:46:50.590  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): see a huge opportunity for that unless it were malicious. Thank you.

317  
00:46:51.780 --> 00:47:00.719  
Margaret Gutierrez: Chris, can you explain a little bit about where you think TBCEP really is on its own path compared to BEAD, for example?

318  
00:47:01.530 --> 00:47:04.889  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): In in regards to 1, 2, 3, or all of them?

319  
00:47:05.150 --> 00:47:06.790  
Margaret Gutierrez: In regards to 1 and 2.

320  
00:47:08.730 --> 00:47:15.120  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Oh, yeah, sure. So, again, I think it comes back to my earlier comments about where we saw

321  
00:47:15.480 --> 00:47:23.339  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): carriers or, you know, awardees, using it to bolster existing infrastructure.

322  
00:47:23.700 --> 00:47:31.070  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Maybe to stretch it out a little bit further, maybe to make it a little bit faster, but it's certainly with the goal of

323  
00:47:31.530 --> 00:47:42.399

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): hitting that bottom line. You know, nobody, I think, at TBCP is, "oh, we're gonna go make a bunch of money doing this". It's about providing broadband to the unserved and underserved.

324  
00:47:42.670 --> 00:47:47.559  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And I feel that BEAD is a profit-motivated,

325  
00:47:49.380 --> 00:47:52.139  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): shot in the arm, and I don't think that

326  
00:47:52.580 --> 00:48:07.259  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): I'll just say, you know, personally, I don't think that's a bad thing, but I think they have different goals. One is to funnel money into a for-profit to provide broadband, and the other is to a more direct

327  
00:48:07.390 --> 00:48:16.810  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): to provide broadband to a selection of unserved and underserved Tribal communities. So I think they have two very different missions.

328  
00:48:17.080 --> 00:48:21.020  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And two very different ways of looking at that spreadsheet.

329  
00:48:21.160 --> 00:48:28.719  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Again, we go back to, we each have our own definition of sustainability. I don't believe that the carriers are looking at sustainability as breaking even.

330  
00:48:29.210 --> 00:48:34.620  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And certainly with the requirements for them to, match and those other things, so

331  
00:48:34.880 --> 00:48:37.149  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): I think it's a very

332  
00:48:37.340 --> 00:48:44.059  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Just to use, again, maybe a poor analogy here, it's the difference between,

333  
00:48:44.680 --> 00:48:54.739  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): a food bank and McDonald's. You know, they both provide food to the communities. One's making money doing it, and one's, they're both feeding people.

334  
00:49:02.010 --> 00:49:21.109  
Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you, Chris. I'm just gonna warn everyone that we are pretty actively having some seismic activity in Southern California, which is where I'm located. We just had another earthquake, so if I go off camera, Angie, please step

in. But just for everyone's awareness, this has been going on for almost 24 hours at this point, so we're moving today.

335  
00:49:21.280 --> 00:49:28.150  
Margaret Gutierrez: I think that's it for the questions on Topic 2. Anyone else have any last-minute

336  
00:49:28.580 --> 00:49:48.160  
Margaret Gutierrez: questions or comments for Topic 2. I'd also like to remind folks that you can also put comments in the chat, or you can submit written comments. If you submit comments in the chat, we will confirm that we received them for the record, and then we'll share at the end of today's consultation where you can submit your written comments and what that deadline is as well.

337  
00:49:57.920 --> 00:50:02.010  
Margaret Gutierrez: Alright, I think we can go to Topic 3.

338  
00:50:05.950 --> 00:50:20.199  
Margaret Gutierrez: So, next, we'll focus on maximizing the impact and effective use of funds. NTIA recognizes that Tribal communities are often asked to do more with limited resources, and that cost-effective practical approaches are critical to advancing meaningful

339  
00:50:20.200 --> 00:50:39.309  
Margaret Gutierrez: broadband connectivity on Tribal lands. In this section, we're considering how TBCP and Native Entities funding can be structured and implemented in ways that stretch every dollar as far as possible, while still supporting high-quality, reliable, and sustainable connectivity solutions. This includes strategies such as approaches to planning, deployment, partnerships, project phasing.

340  
00:50:39.530 --> 00:50:51.760  
Margaret Gutierrez: and leveraging other funding sources while remaining responsive to local conditions and priorities. NTIA is also examining what has worked well in practice, as well as lessons learned from challenges that may have limited impact or increased costs.

341  
00:50:52.030 --> 00:51:04.109  
Margaret Gutierrez: To frame this, we have the following question. What steps should NTIA take to stretch every dollar as far as possible and maximize the impact of TBCP and Native Entities' funding with respect to broadband connectivity on Tribal lands?

342  
00:51:06.370 --> 00:51:07.810  
Margaret Gutierrez: That will open it up.

343  
00:51:08.340 --> 00:51:10.940  
Julia Pulidindi: Our first speaker is Chairman Tehassi Hill.

344  
00:51:11.740 --> 00:51:16.340  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: Yes, thank you. I guess, our comments for

345  
00:51:16.600 --> 00:51:21.580  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: Question 3, prioritize, Tribal capacity planning and governance.

346  
00:51:21.780 --> 00:51:29.950  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: Investing in long-term Tribal capacity, fund comprehensive, broadband plans, support Tribal data sovereignty,

347  
00:51:30.060 --> 00:51:38.260  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: target funding to gaps not covered by BEAD, focus on adoption, digital equity, and community readiness,

348  
00:51:38.380 --> 00:51:45.539  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: address high-cost or hard-to-serve areas, support anchor institutions and community networks,

349  
00:51:45.750 --> 00:51:52.420  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: Strengthen collaboration across federal and state programs. Require alignment with BEAD planning,

350  
00:51:52.630 --> 00:52:04.509  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: promote raiding of federal funds, facilitate interagency collaboration, support cost-effective, scalable, and resilient infrastructure,

351  
00:52:04.840 --> 00:52:07.369  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: encourage shared infrastructure models,

352  
00:52:07.550 --> 00:52:15.090  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: fund workforce development, Promote technology neutrality with, costs discipline,

353  
00:52:15.700 --> 00:52:30.180  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: Ensure technical assistance and reduce administrative burden, provide hands-on technical assistance, supply or simplify application and reporting requirements, and create models, templates, and share resources. Thank you.

354  
00:52:33.350 --> 00:52:34.450  
Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you, Chairman.

355  
00:52:37.550 --> 00:52:41.700  
Julia Pulidindi: Thank you, and our next speaker is, Godfrey Enjady.

356  
00:52:43.200 --> 00:52:45.830  
Godfrey Enjady: Alright, thank you again for letting me speak.

357  
00:52:46.170 --> 00:52:50.789  
Godfrey Enjady: On behalf of, the Mescalero Apache Tribe.

Commented [KJ13]: Sounded like BEAD planning to me

358  
00:52:50.980 --> 00:52:57.739  
Godfrey Enjady: In every effort to stretch every dollar, I think if we look at coming at the TBC program.

359  
00:52:57.910 --> 00:53:09.810  
Godfrey Enjady: being able to look at, how can we streamline permitting, that has cost quite a bit, the full Section 106 reviews. Some of those are kind of, cumbersome, and actually cost a lot.

360  
00:53:10.100 --> 00:53:19.920  
Godfrey Enjady: If you're building middle mile off the reservation, then some of those, other entities, like BLM agencies that, ask for funding.

361  
00:53:20.070 --> 00:53:27.689  
Godfrey Enjady: To be able to help them, issue permits. If we could streamline that, or make it to where it's minimal cost

362  
00:53:27.910 --> 00:53:37.799  
Godfrey Enjady: that will help out the problem. I think that's the other part of that. Someone had talked about timing. That process can take up to 2 years of, doing this.

363  
00:53:38.020 --> 00:53:48.610  
Godfrey Enjady: And since, when you put in for your funding at the very beginning, let's just say 2-3 years pass, costs have risen, especially for, materials.

364  
00:53:48.940 --> 00:54:04.060  
Godfrey Enjady: The other part of that, too, is the BABA compliance. If BABA has to be observed in any future funding, I think that's gonna cause all kinds of problems with BEAD and everything else building across the United States.

365  
00:54:04.170 --> 00:54:14.069  
Godfrey Enjady: That leaves materials, trying to gain new fiber, new hand holes, whatever's needed to build out your network.

366  
00:54:15.140 --> 00:54:18.520  
Godfrey Enjady: It's gonna be pretty rough, especially on the timing side.

367  
00:54:20.210 --> 00:54:37.979  
Godfrey Enjady: As we keep looking at each of every one of these types of things, costs always go up. So, you know, I can see 30% rise in costs, especially if you're held up by permitting, and time is against you. So, if you put in for, like, today, you know what costs are, and then you look at

368  
00:54:38.020 --> 00:54:42.330  
Godfrey Enjady: when you finally build it, those costs have risen only because of time, so

369  
00:54:42.550 --> 00:54:46.800  
Godfrey Enjady: In my way, you know, looking at streamlining a lot of these different,

370  
00:54:47.310 --> 00:54:54.459  
Godfrey Enjady: Aspect of, trying to get things moving is one of the biggest, drivers of, rising costs.

371  
00:54:54.600 --> 00:55:01.429  
Godfrey Enjady: So, the BIA is another one. It does take a long time to get to work with them, especially when you have

372  
00:55:02.260 --> 00:55:05.850  
Godfrey Enjady: Different, areas around the country that have,

373  
00:55:07.130 --> 00:55:18.010  
Godfrey Enjady: allotted lands, those are a little tough to work with, so it takes a little bit more time contacting all individuals of different lands just to get right-of-way and access through those areas. So

374  
00:55:19.110 --> 00:55:26.059  
Godfrey Enjady: It is a cumbersome problem, but those are just some of the things that we can look at of how to streamline

375  
00:55:26.430 --> 00:55:33.399  
Godfrey Enjady: access for permitting, and then looking at materials, to be able to build the network itself. Those are my comments. Thank you.

376  
00:55:37.020 --> 00:55:38.189  
Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you, Godfrey.

377  
00:55:40.680 --> 00:55:43.749  
Julia Pulidindi: Thanks, and our next speaker is Lance Browder.

378  
00:55:45.130 --> 00:56:01.840  
Lance Browder: Yes, thank you. BEAD, of course, solved the access issue. TBCP and NE can solve sustainability, which will stretch every dollar and maximize the impact to our broadband connectivity on Tribal lands.

379  
00:56:02.020 --> 00:56:21.530  
Lance Browder: Without upstream cost control and interconnection, travel networks remain exposed to high transport costs, limited redundancy, and long-term affordability pressure. That leads to lower adoption, higher subsidy dependence, and weaker outcomes, despite successful construction efforts.

380  
00:56:21.700 --> 00:56:26.629  
Lance Browder: A Tribal IXP aligns perfectly because it does not replicate BEAD,

Commented [KJ14]: BIA?

381  
00:56:27.240 --> 00:56:40.660  
Lance Browder: BEAD-funded functions. Instead, it optimizes BEAD investments by lowering these long-term operational costs for all regional networks, which will multiply the value of each federal dollar many times over.

382  
00:56:41.050 --> 00:56:58.210  
Lance Browder: So, by prioritizing this infrastructure that permanently lowers these operating costs, our Tribal networks can survive long after these federal grants sunset, and this converts this one-time federal funding into decades of recurring value.

383  
00:56:58.600 --> 00:57:11.209  
Lance Browder: So if we wait until affordability problems emerge, we'll be forced into corrective subsidies. But if we act now, we can structurally lower these costs and improve sustainability from the outset.

384  
00:57:11.270 --> 00:57:26.740  
Lance Browder: So this is the moment when upstream investment has the highest return and will absolutely allow the NTIA to stretch those dollars and maximize the impact of the TBCEP and any programs.

385  
00:57:26.920 --> 00:57:27.740  
Lance Browder: Thank you.

386  
00:57:40.670 --> 00:57:41.779  
Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you, Lance.

387  
00:57:42.150 --> 00:57:44.409  
Margaret Gutierrez: Chris? I'm assuming that's still you?

388  
00:57:44.410 --> 00:57:45.880  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Yes, yeah.

389  
00:57:46.430 --> 00:57:50.070  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): she's here, but you guys get stuck with me, so

390  
00:57:50.290 --> 00:58:09.779  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): I just told her name's gonna be all over the register, not mine, so Yeah, again, thank you so much. The other speakers, definitely in concurrence with all of that. To hit on sustainability again, just to get it set again, and supporting the programs that we've already invested in.

391  
00:58:10.450 --> 00:58:21.879  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): One that comes up is flexible spending, and, you know, I guess, you know, we're getting on here and we're saying a lot of things, and I just want to point out, just because I'm saying something doesn't mean we're not receiving that. I feel like

392

00:58:21.880 --> 00:58:33.320

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): working with our FPOs and with the folks over, on TBCPl, they've been exceptional and incredible in supporting the flexibility that is required, whether it's,

393  
00:58:33.540 --> 00:58:45.340  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): in the purchase of land or equipment, and what we need to do. The flexibility on the technology that we're looking at. When we started this, looking at things four years ago, there was one, one

394  
00:58:45.340 --> 00:58:56.830  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): subset of technology that we were limited to, and now, every day, we have more and more options. And so, I think continuing the tradition of supporting flexible

395  
00:58:56.980 --> 00:59:14.280  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): technology, the flexibility to go from, as simple as going from a propane generator to a diesel generator, and not having it be, a whole re-scope or federal inquiry or that sort of thing, but the understanding, that, that things move and change, just, just for,

396  
00:59:15.220 --> 00:59:16.490  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): an example.

397  
00:59:16.790 --> 00:59:34.870  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): I'll go ahead and ask again, or, bring it up again, T and H, the, indirect, you know, the, the, it, it, we're a large Tribe, we're, we do a lot of different things, we've got some amazing capabilities, and, at Tlingit and Haida.

398  
00:59:35.000 --> 00:59:38.820  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And the 2% has been

399  
00:59:38.990 --> 00:59:45.969  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): it's been tough. We really gotta keep an eye on that. We, you know, we've got communications and legal and,

400  
00:59:46.080 --> 00:59:52.009  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): construction folks and warehouse and all these other things, and you know, it can end up costing us

401  
00:59:52.640 --> 00:59:59.720  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): more money, even to get to zero on some of this stuff. So, the ability to,

402  
00:59:59.860 --> 01:00:10.470  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): at least have, negotiated or have a discussion around, indirect would be helpful, because we can then leverage a lot of our own internal,

403  
01:00:10.680 --> 01:00:14.330  
Rain Felkl: more than we already are, internal,

404  
01:00:15.060 --> 01:00:18.760  
Rain Felkl: Capabilities, to support this program.

405  
01:00:18.890 --> 01:00:24.080  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): So, flexibility, the flexibility to do

406  
01:00:24.690 --> 01:00:39.180  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): what needs to be done? In some communities, it's Starlinks and paying for those. In some communities, it's leasing fiber. In some communities, it's putting wireless gear on rooftops. In some, it's building a tower.

407  
01:00:39.180 --> 01:00:57.180  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And again, I think we're a great example of that flexibility, and so continuing to honor that and to lean into that has been an incredible strength and a great way to maximize federal dollars, where it's not, oh, you need to run fiber to everybody, and it's, you know.

408  
01:00:57.420 --> 01:01:01.500  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): a lot of money per user when,

409  
01:01:02.460 --> 01:01:05.550  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): different problems have different solutions. So,

410  
01:01:06.240 --> 01:01:09.729  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): I think that's the hallmark on this one. Thank you.

411  
01:01:23.610 --> 01:01:25.850  
Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you so much, Chris. Godfrey?

412  
01:01:27.060 --> 01:01:32.620  
Godfrey Enjady: I'd like to make a comment on the, sustainability portion of this, that,

413  
01:01:33.230 --> 01:01:37.889  
Godfrey Enjady: most of the cars are talking about. Sustainability is actually

414  
01:01:38.350 --> 01:01:47.340  
Godfrey Enjady: not part of TBCP, it's actually infrastructure funding, since it was building out the networks, whatever method or technology you use.

415  
01:01:47.590 --> 01:01:58.399  
Godfrey Enjady: But as we look at sustainability, sustainability has been built into providing telecommunications throughout the United States through a program through USAC and FCC.

416  
01:01:58.630 --> 01:02:05.910  
Godfrey Enjady: there's a fund there called USF, Universal Service Fund, which has \$9 billion in it right now, and

417  
01:02:06.110 --> 01:02:12.819  
Godfrey Enjady: Telecom companies across the nation, draw from that fund. As long as you're under 50,000 access lines.

418  
01:02:13.000 --> 01:02:17.520  
Godfrey Enjady: You get an ETC, you have to go through a different method of how to get to

419  
01:02:17.700 --> 01:02:22.519  
Godfrey Enjady: qualified for that program, and being able to be a provider for your area.

420  
01:02:22.730 --> 01:02:29.630  
Godfrey Enjady: Mescalero Apache Telecom has done that, and our provider with, about

421  
01:02:29.760 --> 01:02:49.550  
Godfrey Enjady: nine more Tribal Entities across the nation. So we're very few that are take part into that sustainability funding that's available, and that comes from the FCC. It's called USF, and like I said, it is kind of cumbersome to become part of it, so it is a barrier to entry for that program to be able to

422  
01:02:49.830 --> 01:02:57.600  
Godfrey Enjady: have new ISPs, or Tribal ISPs, be able to be part of that, and how to come under regulation

423  
01:02:57.770 --> 01:03:01.480  
Godfrey Enjady: To be able to provide the services that are needed for that.

424  
01:03:01.620 --> 01:03:04.629  
Godfrey Enjady: The sustainability part of that, also,

425  
01:03:04.930 --> 01:03:21.770  
Godfrey Enjady: directs you to provide voice services, so that's goes along with that. So voice and internet services are a part of that. It is, like I said, not easy, but that is the sustainability part that can be brought up, and that program has been around for quite a while.

426  
01:03:22.060 --> 01:03:41.789  
Godfrey Enjady: So, Maddie and a lot of other Tribal telcos are part of that, and able to do that. So, hopefully at some point in time, we can discuss that a little bit further, but it is a fund that's there, and that's what the purpose of it I believe the gentleman from Alaska mentioned it, part of the Alaska Fund, that is part of that program.

427  
01:03:41.980 --> 01:03:54.159  
Godfrey Enjady: But, barriers to entry is kind of tough, so in order to understand that, it is a form of regulation, but the returns on it are very good. So, using the funds that

428  
01:03:54.420 --> 01:04:10.059  
Godfrey Enjady: the United States has invested into Tribal broadband. It needs to have some kind of sustainability factor built into it to be able to provide and make sure that none of this investment goes awry. So, those are my comments. Thank you.

429  
01:04:18.790 --> 01:04:19.990  
Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you so much.

430  
01:04:26.090 --> 01:04:27.850  
Julia Pulidindi: Chris Cropley?

431  
01:04:28.780 --> 01:04:30.889  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Hmm. Yeah, thank you very much.

432  
01:04:31.080 --> 01:04:34.630  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Thanks for hanging in there with the seismic activity, too, I know how that is.

433  
01:04:35.100 --> 01:04:39.919  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Thank you, Godfrey.

434  
01:04:40.060 --> 01:04:42.749  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): It brings me back to,

435  
01:04:43.570 --> 01:05:00.100  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): That's a great point, Godfrey, and I couldn't agree more, and I would just like to take the opportunity to point out that one of the things on my cheat sheet here that I didn't mention, and maybe I was going to bring it up in the next one I'd like to believe, but I'll bring it up now, is lowering that barrier to entry for ETC.

436  
01:05:00.200 --> 01:05:13.549  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): I think we've found that broadband is the mission here. I mean, we're all speaking over broadband right now, and I don't know anybody that's dialed in, but I'm not looking at the cheat sheet. You are. And so, providing voice costs

437  
01:05:14.620 --> 01:05:22.049  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): a lot more money, and takes a lot more, technical expertise, and time, and,

438  
01:05:22.240 --> 01:05:25.890  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): a higher barrier to entry to access those programs.

439  
01:05:26.150 --> 01:05:31.850  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Also, each ETC is regulated by, well, it depends on which lawyer I ask.

440  
01:05:31.860 --> 01:05:48.429  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): is regulated by the state, in some states, and do we go through the state here in Alaska, or can we get ETC from the FCC? There's a lot of back and forth on that, and as we're trying to stand up this new program.

441  
01:05:48.500 --> 01:05:54.419  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And really get down to providing, you know, zeros and ones, broadband.

442  
01:05:54.620 --> 01:05:58.990  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): It would be nice to have help

443  
01:05:59.350 --> 01:06:07.949  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): in getting access to status or changing, the requirements for the status for, Tribal,

444  
01:06:08.920 --> 01:06:27.810  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): providers to get access to that funding, without having to spend more money or take more time, again, just to provide something folks already have access to. If you have access to broadband, you have access to voice and video and all the other things, so I think we're kind of in a regulatory legacy,

445  
01:06:28.400 --> 01:06:33.039  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): conundrum there, and I think there's a great deal of motivation on the parts of

446  
01:06:33.150 --> 01:06:35.540  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): some of these legacy carriers to

447  
01:06:37.360 --> 01:06:57.359  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): to make it even more difficult to get access to ETC status. So, just to be very clear, make it easier for ETC status by removing the voice requirement or creating some other mechanism for access to those funds for those providers where we are standing things up.

448  
01:06:57.490 --> 01:07:02.850  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): For the first time, and don't have access to voice, out of the gate. Thank you.

449  
01:07:10.810 --> 01:07:11.660  
Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you.

450  
01:07:18.710 --> 01:07:21.520

Angela Thi Bennett: I think if we don't have any more hands

451  
01:07:21.520 --> 01:07:23.189  
Margaret Gutierrez: Rick Noonan was still waiting.

452  
01:07:23.190 --> 01:07:23.810  
Angela Thi Bennett: Okay.

453  
01:07:25.490 --> 01:07:32.690  
Margaret Gutierrez: And then I'd also like, at some point, to invite Edwin to share his comments out loud, rather than just in the chat, if he's willing.

454  
01:07:33.720 --> 01:07:36.360  
Maci Morin: Alright, Rick, you are unmuted and ready to go.

455  
01:07:49.610 --> 01:07:52.090  
Margaret Gutierrez: I still show Rick as muted.

456  
01:07:52.610 --> 01:08:09.520  
Rick Noonan: Sorry. That was me. I wanted to just say, respectfully, that I've never been in an earthquake, so I hope you remain safe and on this call. My name is Rick Noonan. I'm the Broadband Technical Advisor for Santee Sioux Nation in Nebraska.

Commented [KJ15]: Verified

457  
01:08:09.660 --> 01:08:13.119  
Rick Noonan: And I really appreciate this opportunity to,

458  
01:08:13.280 --> 01:08:23.500  
Rick Noonan: discuss with other Tribal leaders, some of the obstacles they're facing. We have submitted, our responses to the questions already.

459  
01:08:23.640 --> 01:08:30.240  
Rick Noonan: So hopefully those will be on file. But I did want to address the actual question where it says,

460  
01:08:30.490 --> 01:08:34.360  
Rick Noonan: steps should NTIA take to stretch every dollar?

461  
01:08:34.740 --> 01:08:41.960  
Rick Noonan: It's my understanding that there was about \$2 billion request for less than \$1 billion for NOFO 2.

462  
01:08:42.270 --> 01:08:55.050  
Rick Noonan: I would say, as a small Tribe in Nebraska, we're slightly jealous of all the awards that were given out in, you know, 30, 40 million dollars, and more to, larger Tribes.

463  
01:08:55.130 --> 01:09:14.719

Rick Noonan: So, you know, now we're in a position where we have to maximize our dollars. We did receive a, equitable distribution grant, and with those dollars, we're able to deploy, one and a half towers. So when we talk about stretching every dollar.

464  
01:09:14.979 --> 01:09:21.880  
Rick Noonan: Selfishly, we would like to stretch a few dollars to help us complete that infrastructure

465  
01:09:21.920 --> 01:09:36.999  
Rick Noonan: and get, affordable, fixed wireless to the community. Granted, we all know on this call that fiber is the best solution, but it's also very costly.

466  
01:09:37.090 --> 01:09:42.720  
Rick Noonan: And I did appreciate some of the comments from Chris and Lance about transport costs.

467  
01:09:42.859 --> 01:09:52.069  
Rick Noonan: Most of us, I would guess, may be hosted by independent phone companies who up to this point have

468  
01:09:52.189 --> 01:09:57.740  
Rick Noonan: Really no responsibility to provide affordable backhaul or middle mile.

469  
01:09:57.910 --> 01:10:11.230  
Rick Noonan: So, obviously, TBCP, I don't think, can put a thumb on anybody for that, but that would sure help for the sustainability. We did, as a small ISP,

470  
01:10:11.230 --> 01:10:23.120  
Rick Noonan: of less than 200 customers become an ETC through the USOC, and were able to get some of the ACP dollars. But I guess, just in response to this specific question.

471  
01:10:23.200 --> 01:10:32.009  
Rick Noonan: I think if a Tribe received, some infrastructure, equitable distribution dollars, which clearly

472  
01:10:32.140 --> 01:10:37.789  
Rick Noonan: did not support full deployment. I think those dollars should be,

473  
01:10:38.090 --> 01:10:44.689  
Rick Noonan: possibly stretch to those, Tribes that receive those monies. So, I do thank you for,

474  
01:10:45.080 --> 01:10:53.400  
Rick Noonan: the tasks that you have in front of you as TBCP and the limited amount of funds that remain, so thank you for the opportunity to speak.

475

01:10:54.440 --> 01:11:08.050

Margaret Gutierrez: Rick, thank you so much for highlighting that. I do want to ensure that we acknowledge that there are still many Tribes who got funding from us but were unable to complete their builds as a result of increasing costs, which we've heard both on the last consultation and this consultation.

476

01:11:08.090 --> 01:11:30.950

Margaret Gutierrez: And then there's also Tribes who already have maybe satellite, but it isn't working in their area, and so in the BEAD program, they were offered satellite service because that is the lowest cost technology available, but it is already not working in their area, so I just want to ensure that we've acknowledged those Tribes and ask you to come forward and share your thoughts on

477

01:11:30.950 --> 01:11:39.820

Margaret Gutierrez: how we can best assist you in this process as well. And then I also see so thank you for that, Rick. And then I also see Danae's hand is raised. Danae Wilson.

478

01:11:42.690 --> 01:11:47.179

Maci Morin: Hey, Danae, you now have permission to unmute, whenever you're ready.

479

01:11:47.730 --> 01:11:55.510

Danae Wilson: Thank you, I appreciate you allowing me this time. I have a couple of comments. First, in terms of satellite.

480

01:11:55.510 --> 01:12:13.139

Danae Wilson: there's some considerations that have to be taken into place. It may be the lowest cost to deploy, but it is not the lowest cost to sustainably use by the end user. So, equipment, \$600, month-to-month fees, \$500 to \$600 a month.

481

01:12:13.160 --> 01:12:21.490

Danae Wilson: Even on the low end, where people are paying \$150 a month, in rural, low-income

482

01:12:21.780 --> 01:12:38.690

Danae Wilson: communities, it's really difficult to pay those fees, and in the Alaska area, we had bills presented where people were paying \$1,500 a month for their satellite service, and that's

483

01:12:39.710 --> 01:12:52.970

Danae Wilson: just not feasible for most communities and most individuals on Tribal lands. So, seeing Tribes as high cost, and where satellite would be the preferred solution doesn't always work. I think

484

01:12:52.970 --> 01:13:02.149

Danae Wilson: opportunity here is to make sure that Tribes are at the table on the consultation when it is

485

01:13:02.310 --> 01:13:15.649

Danae Wilson: for funds that are being deployed over their lands. So, if you take state BEAD dollars as an example, there are real barriers to accessing BEAD funds. So, Tribes have to produce a line of credit.

486  
01:13:15.670 --> 01:13:26.220  
Danae Wilson: A letter that shows that they have a line of credit, and they have to produce match. And that line of credit has to equal the match that they're required to do. So if you're

487  
01:13:26.540 --> 01:13:46.170  
Danae Wilson: match is 25%, and you're applying for \$50 million to serve your community, that match can be that line of credit is a barrier, and the match can be a barrier, where that did not exist in TBCP. So, there has to be some sort of a give and take there, where we utilize if

488  
01:13:49.090 --> 01:14:02.619  
Danae Wilson: TBCP is not going to be available to Tribes for broadband deployment of their lands, then BEAD has to recognize that those were waivers given to us because those are things that you can't do. We cannot collateralize federal lands.

489  
01:14:02.760 --> 01:14:10.390  
Danae Wilson: So, getting a line of credit based on our land ownership or the size of our reservation simply can't be done. Banks don't allow for that.

490  
01:14:10.390 --> 01:14:30.030  
Danae Wilson: And, so we want to make sure that we're, adequately determining what's best for those Tribes on their Tribal lands, and how to stretch the dollar, how do we maximize the impact? We really need to think about, what the impact to those how many households are they serving? And

491  
01:14:30.030 --> 01:14:43.839  
Danae Wilson: a competitor who has never served Tribal lands isn't going to automatically come in and say, "oh, thank you, we're going to serve you now because we have federal funding". No, because it doesn't fit their return on investment model. And so

492  
01:14:43.840 --> 01:14:51.900  
Danae Wilson: Satellite isn't something that can sustainably be, purchased by consumers in these rural

493  
01:14:52.040 --> 01:15:10.810  
Danae Wilson: Tribal locations that have high poverty, and so there's a huge disparity there. That can't be the only solution. We have to think about wireless, we have to think about fiber backhaul, and we have to think about the consultation that carriers are required to do to Tribes.

494  
01:15:10.810 --> 01:15:21.149  
Danae Wilson: for Tribes through FCC, there has to be a requirement that, that there's a negotiation on the service fees that you heard from the last caller. We want to make sure that

495  
01:15:21.150 --> 01:15:31.509  
Danae Wilson: That that backhaul is as, reasonable as possible, so that the communities that are trying to be served has to be,

496  
01:15:32.020 --> 01:15:51.580  
Danae Wilson: something that they can afford. We don't want people choosing between healthcare and medicine and food and broadband. It shouldn't be a choice between necessities. It should be something that can be fit into the budget, and that's what Tribes have been trying to do through their TBCP applications, but now that this funding is sort of being

497  
01:15:52.120 --> 01:15:57.750  
Danae Wilson: re-analyzed, and we're supposed to be coming up with a,

498  
01:15:58.610 --> 01:16:03.960  
Danae Wilson: Plan for how these dollars can be maximized, then we really have to start thinking about

499  
01:16:04.070 --> 01:16:10.570  
Danae Wilson: where does the backhaul not exist today, and how can it be built? If that's with BEAD money, if that's with

500  
01:16:10.750 --> 01:16:18.679  
Danae Wilson: Middle-Mile money, whatever that is, we need to make sure. And there has to be incentives, so when,

501  
01:16:18.730 --> 01:16:34.489  
Danae Wilson: Department of Energy is looking at building out the energy grid. Are they reserving space on that energy grid for, for fiber connectivity? Can their pole attachments be included in that negotiation, and can they be planning for pole attachments

502  
01:16:34.560 --> 01:16:53.440  
Danae Wilson: in railroads, in rights-of-way. Can we be utilizing that right-of-way to build broadband in areas? And those are all government-funded programs, those are all government-managed programs. Is there any way to cooperatively work with other agencies to ensure

503  
01:16:53.440 --> 01:17:02.739  
Danae Wilson: that broadband is on the table when we talk about building out, other issues. And so, I think those are really important,

504  
01:17:02.950 --> 01:17:05.290  
Danae Wilson: Considerations that we have to take.

505  
01:17:05.510 --> 01:17:23.730  
Danae Wilson: Satellite can't be the only answer for Tribal lands. It has water reflection, has tree cover, foliage issues, it doesn't go well through cement

buildings. Tin, many, many of us have metal roofs. There'll be bouncing of signal off those metal roofs.

506  
01:17:23.730 --> 01:17:28.529  
Danae Wilson: We know that there are already issues with both wireless and satellite.

507  
01:17:28.530 --> 01:17:38.779  
Danae Wilson: Let's take those issues into consideration and determine how can we best build on Tribal lands and utilize every resource at our fingertips. Thank you.

508  
01:17:40.900 --> 01:17:42.940  
Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you, Danae, for your comments.

509  
01:17:43.940 --> 01:17:50.880  
Margaret Gutierrez: With that, I would like to see if Edwin would love to come on the record.

510  
01:17:52.270 --> 01:17:53.670  
Margaret Gutierrez: Edwin Romero?

511  
01:17:58.550 --> 01:17:59.790  
Edwin Romero: Yeah, hi, can you hear me?

512  
01:18:01.140 --> 01:18:07.840  
Margaret Gutierrez: Yes, but actually, before we start with you, Edwin, sorry, Danae, will you state your title and the Tribe for the record? I forgot to ask you.

513  
01:18:08.820 --> 01:18:17.090  
Danae Wilson: Oh, great. My name is Danae Wilson, D-A-N-A-E-W-I-L-S-O-N, and I am the Executive Director for Nez Perce Tribe.

Commented [KJ16]: Verified

514  
01:18:17.090 --> 01:18:32.960  
Danae Wilson: I did forget to mention two things, while I got the mic again. I forgot to mention that not all states are requiring consultation with Tribes. That should be a red flag. And then, we want to make sure that the BSLs, if somebody was, potentially

515  
01:18:32.960 --> 01:18:36.049  
Danae Wilson: in curing for TBCP Round 2,

516  
01:18:36.050 --> 01:18:49.379  
Danae Wilson: many of those Tribal BSLs were left out of BEAD because they couldn't count them. They were considered served already because they were in curing. We want to make sure that those BSLs get added back to BEAD so that every,

517  
01:18:49.900 --> 01:18:55.200  
Danae Wilson: Tribal home is connected, or every, Tribal location is served. Thank you.

518  
01:18:55.670 --> 01:19:01.289  
Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you, Danae. All right, Edwin, same thing for you, if you could state your title and Tribe you're representing for the record.

519  
01:19:04.030 --> 01:19:15.140  
Edwin Romero: Sure. This is Edwin Romero, Director of IT, with Nooksack Tribe up in Northwest Washington. Just, wanted to make two quick comments. First one,

520  
01:19:15.360 --> 01:19:18.029  
Edwin Romero: Looks like I sent it in chat, so I might as well read from it.

521  
01:19:18.110 --> 01:19:28.479  
Edwin Romero: Thank you for the chance to speak. I just wanted to say that, you know, like many others have echoed, TBCP and BEAD has delivered so far on a great mission and goal.

522  
01:19:28.480 --> 01:19:41.390  
Edwin Romero: These programs have been granted enough funding and recognized for each that they are making a difference in many rural areas that would otherwise be, you know, left behind because it was too expensive, or whatever the reason.

523  
01:19:41.740 --> 01:19:46.019  
Edwin Romero: What I wanted to ask for, regarding Topic 3 is.

524  
01:19:46.300 --> 01:19:51.259  
Edwin Romero: I know the primary goal of TBCP funding is, you know, for

525  
01:19:51.620 --> 01:19:55.230  
Edwin Romero: Native American Tribes to create their own infrastructure.

526  
01:19:55.420 --> 01:19:59.899  
Edwin Romero: But in some places, it's very difficult, or it's very expensive.

527  
01:20:00.100 --> 01:20:04.050  
Edwin Romero: So, my thought was, you know, I'm gonna we're just sharing thoughts here.

528  
01:20:04.390 --> 01:20:09.229  
Edwin Romero: Can we someday allow for improvement of existing infrastructure?

529  
01:20:09.850 --> 01:20:25.260  
Edwin Romero: For example, you know, just two quick examples. Maybe setting funds to pay for bolstering existing cell phone coverage using, you know, the typical little microcell technology, you know, on existing

530  
01:20:25.920 --> 01:20:30.849

Commented [KJ17]: Verified

Edwin Romero: backhaul. I know that's not a new infrastructure, but it is, you know

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01:20:31.140 --> 01:20:47.710

Edwin Romero: needed. It's a needed service in a lot of, rural communities. Cell phone service is very poor, and which makes it difficult, for example, for public safety issues. Tribal police can't get to certain areas safely because they can't even, you know, call out.

532

01:20:48.000 --> 01:20:57.750

Edwin Romero: Can we fund, for example, partnerships with existing providers to provide something like a tie-in, quote-unquote.

533

01:20:57.910 --> 01:21:07.220

Edwin Romero: To existing fiber backhaul that can be extended using WISP-like technologies in Native communities.

534

01:21:07.850 --> 01:21:19.679

Edwin Romero: This, I feel, would be a good way to, again, stretch the dollars, maximizing what we have, in places that we can't install new things, or where it would be too expensive.

535

01:21:19.800 --> 01:21:23.050

Edwin Romero: Too mountainous, too rugged, whatever the reason may be.

536

01:21:23.590 --> 01:21:31.370

Edwin Romero: My second point that I wanted to ask, or just state, is that I believe things like the BABA

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01:21:31.560 --> 01:21:37.530

Edwin Romero: It kind of cheapen or lower the bar to entry, by going

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01:21:37.900 --> 01:21:48.849

Edwin Romero: down to copper, legacy copper-only broadband technology, and I don't believe that that's again, it's just my opinion, I don't believe that that's the best way to maximize

539

01:21:48.990 --> 01:22:04.430

Edwin Romero: these dollars, and to provide not only great service and broadband for the communities now, but to lock that in, that service for the next generations. I believe that keeping that bar higher, trying to go as high as we can go with fiber optic.

540

01:22:04.430 --> 01:22:10.419

Edwin Romero: If it's just not possible, then it's not possible, you know? Some things aren't meant to be, but

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01:22:10.420 --> 01:22:15.610

Edwin Romero: I believe that that bar should be set as high as we can set it, and not lower it, just

542  
01:22:15.690 --> 01:22:20.200  
Edwin Romero: Just because. That's all the points I wanted to make. Thank you for letting me speak.

543  
01:22:22.050 --> 01:22:23.329  
Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you so much.

544  
01:22:24.360 --> 01:22:28.429  
Angela Thi Bennett: Hey, Margaret, can we go back to Danae? Danae, are you still on?

545  
01:22:33.210 --> 01:22:35.960  
Maci Morin: She has been unmuted. Danae, whenever you're ready.

546  
01:22:35.960 --> 01:22:36.999  
Danae Wilson: Yes, I'm here.

547  
01:22:37.360 --> 01:22:45.709  
Angela Thi Bennett: So Danae, you mentioned earlier, that not all states are requiring, excuse me, Tribal consultations. Can you expand on that?

548  
01:22:46.320 --> 01:23:04.849  
Danae Wilson: Sure, excuse me, some states have reported in Tribal broadband forums that they don't have a route for consultation, that it's not a requirement, that consent is, not necessary, and so,

549  
01:23:05.010 --> 01:23:08.510  
Danae Wilson: Nez Perce is in Idaho, Washington, and Oregon.

550  
01:23:09.070 --> 01:23:13.160  
Danae Wilson: And the way that the states are doing things is completely different.

551  
01:23:13.170 --> 01:23:23.209  
Danae Wilson: And so, where we may have good relationships in Washington, and we just came back from Oregon legislative meetings last week.

552  
01:23:23.210 --> 01:23:31.359  
Danae Wilson: That may not be the case, say, in Idaho. Now, Idaho's working with the Tribe very, very well, don't get me wrong, but I'm just using that as my example.

553  
01:23:31.360 --> 01:23:44.020  
Danae Wilson: Many of us are located in different states, and that we can clearly see that the states are doing things differently when it comes to BEAD and their deployments, and how they're considering what they consider Tribal consultation.

554  
01:23:44.020 --> 01:24:03.889

Danae Wilson: And whether that is a, documentation of what the Tribe needs, what's unfunded, and how many BSLs, that we're talking about, or, where it is consent, where they've already funded somebody else to build on those Tribal lands, what are they considering consent? Is that

555  
01:24:04.270 --> 01:24:13.110  
Danae Wilson: a face-to-face meeting? Is it a consideration? Is it just a Dear Tribal Chairman letter? It isn't consistent across

556  
01:24:13.390 --> 01:24:21.369  
Danae Wilson: Any of the states, that we're currently working in, but it has been the same for other Tribes who have been in these,

557  
01:24:21.490 --> 01:24:32.439  
Danae Wilson: Tribal, broadband meetings, where they're talking about the disparity between what was considered consultation and what is considered consent.

558  
01:24:35.510 --> 01:24:36.850  
Angela Thi Bennett: Okay, thank you.

559  
01:24:45.140 --> 01:24:47.560  
Margaret Gutierrez: I think we are ready to move to Topic 4.

560  
01:24:55.760 --> 01:25:00.479  
Angela Thi Bennett: Okay, so next we're going to turn to reducing administrative burden.

561  
01:25:00.610 --> 01:25:17.230  
Angela Thi Bennett: So NTIA recognizes that administrative requirements, while essential for accountability, can sometimes create unnecessary complexity or strained capacity, particularly for Tribal governments managing multiple federal programs at the same time.

562  
01:25:17.600 --> 01:25:35.489  
Angela Thi Bennett: Through the TBCP and the Native Entities Grant Program, NTIA is examining opportunities to streamline processes, promote greater flexibility, and better align grant requirements across programs, while maintaining appropriate oversight and stewardship of federal funds.

563  
01:25:35.640 --> 01:25:51.130  
Angela Thi Bennett: This includes efforts to provide clearer guidance, more consistent support, and fewer duplicative or burdensome requirements across the full grant life cycle, from application and award, through implementation, reporting, and closeout.

564  
01:25:51.360 --> 01:26:01.649  
Angela Thi Bennett: NTIA is also considering potential reforms aimed at reducing red tape and improving accessibility and responsiveness to Tribal needs.

565

01:26:01.940 --> 01:26:12.759

Angela Thi Bennett: To frame the dialogue, we pose the following question. What steps can NTIA take to reduce administrative burdens and red tape for Tribal governments?

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01:26:20.210 --> 01:26:29.870

Maci Morin: Okay, first person I see is Chairman Hill, and then followed by Danae Wilson. So, Chairman Hill, you are unmuted and ready to speak when you are.

567

01:26:30.510 --> 01:26:32.190

Chairman Tehassi Hill: Alright, thank you again.

568

01:26:33.100 --> 01:26:43.890

Chairman Tehassi Hill: Oneida's comments are, simplify the application reporting requirements, shorten and standardize application forms, create tiered requirements based on project size.

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01:26:44.160 --> 01:26:58.030

Chairman Tehassi Hill: Reduce duplicative reporting, offer pre-approved templates, expand technical assistance and direct support, provide hands-on grant navigation support, establish a Tribal help desk,

570

01:26:58.340 --> 01:27:01.359

Chairman Tehassi Hill: offer training and capacity building workshops,

571

01:27:01.650 --> 01:27:05.080

Chairman Tehassi Hill: streamline federal coordination and reduce overlap,

572

01:27:05.360 --> 01:27:11.840

Chairman Tehassi Hill: align requirements across federal agencies, allow shared documentation across programs,

573

01:27:12.010 --> 01:27:15.280

Chairman Tehassi Hill: clarify federal roles and points of contacts,

574

01:27:15.620 --> 01:27:32.100

Chairman Tehassi Hill: respect Tribal sovereignty and reduce unnecessary federal oversight, accept Tribal policies and procedures, recognize Tribal regulatory authority, support Tribal self-certification, improve program transparency and predictability,

575

01:27:32.250 --> 01:27:48.130

Chairman Tehassi Hill: publish clear timelines and expectations, offer plain language guidance, provide early review opportunities, reduce financial administrative risk for Tribes, allow flexible match requirements, provide upfront funding options,

576

01:27:48.240 --> 01:27:52.640

Chairman Tehassi Hill: and, simplify audit and compliance processes. Thank you.

577

01:27:56.050 --> 01:27:57.209

Angela Thi Bennett: Thank you, Chairman.

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01:27:57.210 --> 01:28:03.640

Margaret Gutierrez: Chairman, can you give us a little bit of detail on some of those items so that we can understand a little bit better?

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01:28:08.450 --> 01:28:11.259

Chairman Tehassi Hill: Which ones do you have questions on?

580

01:28:11.460 --> 01:28:21.039

Margaret Gutierrez: I mean, like, let's talk just a little bit about TA. What would be helpful for you guys to see as an increase or an improvement with TA with technical assistance, specifically?

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01:28:23.520 --> 01:28:28.929

Chairman Tehassi Hill: Yeah, that's, you know, I think as we continue to move forward with the development of the

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01:28:29.560 --> 01:28:33.660

Chairman Tehassi Hill: programs and processes, and being able to have that outreach.

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01:28:33.920 --> 01:28:44.530

Chairman Tehassi Hill: for that, that, technical assistance and the development of, the internal, processes that

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01:28:44.890 --> 01:28:47.189

Chairman Tehassi Hill: Sorry, I had a phone call.

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01:28:50.310 --> 01:29:05.000

Chairman Tehassi Hill: technical assistance, again, to develop the programming that involves that, the development of that access

586

01:29:07.150 --> 01:29:11.300

Chairman Tehassi Hill: and not just the, infrastructure.

587

01:29:13.420 --> 01:29:32.610

Margaret Gutierrez: And what does that TA look like? Are you talking about in person, or because I know we specifically haven't had a technical assistance team, but our team specifically does a lot of TA directly, but in some cases, the Tribes are much more comfortable, obviously, in person, so can you give me a little bit of insight on that level?

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01:29:33.200 --> 01:29:42.650

Chairman Tehassi Hill: Yes, I guess for Oneida specifically, you know, we're fine with, looking at the virtual options for that. I think everyone's pretty

589

01:29:42.930 --> 01:29:48.409

Chairman Tehassi Hill: Familiar with, you know, sharing your screens to have the technical question looked at and answered.

590  
01:29:48.530 --> 01:29:57.860  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: But, I think in some areas, it might be more advantageous, for the in-person,

591  
01:29:58.000 --> 01:30:05.860  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: sort of, technical assistance. I know a lot of Tribes in Wisconsin up north have,

592  
01:30:06.050 --> 01:30:21.100  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: internet access, capacity, which obviously these grants are supposed to be here to help address, so more than likely, a lot would need to be able to be in person, depending on the Tribes, but at Oneida specifically,

593  
01:30:21.230 --> 01:30:25.640  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: the virtual options for that technical assistance would probably be

594  
01:30:26.040 --> 01:30:30.489  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: most, appreciated for the timing and availability

595  
01:30:30.650 --> 01:30:37.310  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: are more when you don't have to get on a plane and fly somewhere, but it's being able to do that,

596  
01:30:37.560 --> 01:30:38.640  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: Virtually.

597  
01:30:40.460 --> 01:30:41.470  
Margaret Gutierrez: Okay, thank you.

598  
01:30:41.470 --> 01:30:42.210  
Isabel Lopez: Thank you

599  
01:30:42.790 --> 01:30:53.510  
Isabel Lopez: Thank you, Chairman. I think you also mentioned reporting. Could you give a little bit more information about what would be helpful as far as reporting, what you'd like to see?

600  
01:30:53.790 --> 01:30:56.209  
Isabel Lopez: What's been a hindrance?

601  
01:30:57.880 --> 01:31:01.410  
Chairman Tehassi Hill: Yeah, I think as we, continue to move forward,

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01:31:01.950 --> 01:31:19.830

Chairman Tehassi Hill: as I mentioned in my opening, that Oneida is a self-governance Tribe. So being able to have that type of reporting and that flexibility, I think, is important for Tribes to determine what that need is and how best to move that forward, and then those reporting requirements

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01:31:19.960 --> 01:31:32.779

Chairman Tehassi Hill: are not as cumbersome as individual programs, federal programs. So, looking at being able to, again, have a kind of, standardized reporting

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01:31:32.910 --> 01:31:45.390

Chairman Tehassi Hill: grant reporting system, I think is important. So, you know, we always lean on the self-governance aspects of reporting as something that, we're able to

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01:31:45.550 --> 01:31:49.029

Chairman Tehassi Hill: Do timely, and it is pretty regular.

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01:31:57.020 --> 01:31:58.119

Isabel Lopez: Thank you.

607

01:32:01.270 --> 01:32:07.569

Maci Morin: Next we will move to Danae, and then we'll follow up with Chris. Danae, whenever you're ready.

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01:32:07.780 --> 01:32:20.229

Danae Wilson: Thank you. I appreciate I'm sorry I'm taking up so much speaking time. I definitely think there are some things that NTIA can help in terms of administrative burdens. First, the

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01:32:20.230 --> 01:32:30.640

Danae Wilson: until you're awarded, you don't really know what you don't know. And so, NTIA's TBCP team has been really good about providing,

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01:32:31.200 --> 01:32:48.599

Danae Wilson: documents on what your next steps are, or how do you start administering the funds, and I'll use BABA as an example. In order to get a BABA waiver, or to start that process and to get it approved, from the time that it starts to the time that it's completed, that time eats into your program time.

611

01:32:48.680 --> 01:33:04.819

Danae Wilson: And, from the time that you get a, a right-of-way from Bureau of Indian Affairs, or from Bureau of Land Management, or whomever you have to work with to get right-of-ways, that eats into your deployment time. So, making sure that,

612

01:33:04.970 --> 01:33:19.950

Danae Wilson: charting your timeline is as accurate as possible in the curing process. What would it look like if you have to get a BABA waiver? How many weeks can that take? If you have to get rights of way, how many weeks can that take? And I think,

613  
01:33:20.580 --> 01:33:37.959  
Danae Wilson: talking about the, federal partnerships between agencies, what right now is considered a categorical exclusion, and can Tribes start implementing that or utilizing that within their own EAs? So, I think there's a lot of ways that NTIA can take

614  
01:33:38.230 --> 01:33:41.560  
Danae Wilson: their partnerships with their federal agencies.

615  
01:33:41.720 --> 01:33:55.779  
Danae Wilson: and utilizing that information to strengthen what Tribes are doing on the ground and how we're rolling out projects. The other thing that I think's really important is to think about timing. It has been a problem.

616  
01:33:55.780 --> 01:34:12.469  
Danae Wilson: TBCP was the first on the ground, and what came after that was USDA funding for telecommunications and for broadband, but it came after the fact, so if you already included those BSLs in your, TBCP Round 1 application and weren't awarded,

617  
01:34:12.540 --> 01:34:32.410  
Danae Wilson: including them again in your USDA application, because at that point, neither application was approved, right? But including those same BSLs as a backup funding to your TBCP Round 1, was problematic. So we just need to make sure that the timing is correct. If,

618  
01:34:32.530 --> 01:34:48.330  
Danae Wilson: an application goes in and isn't in curing, it shouldn't take those BSLs away from other federal funding applications. And right now, the way that it works is once an application goes in and those lends are claimed, it's really, really hard then to say, well, if I don't

619  
01:34:48.660 --> 01:34:53.120  
Danae Wilson: get 100% of the funding, I'm gonna need to find other funding to do this project.

620  
01:34:53.120 --> 01:35:16.379  
Danae Wilson: And that coordination has to take place, and we're talking these are federal agencies, USDA, FCC, NTIA, that coordination is happening on the back end. It really would be helpful to know timelines if you're applying for TBCP or BEAD funding, any of the funding that's going out through NTIA. Does it line up, and can those BSLs be counted

621  
01:35:16.380 --> 01:35:29.320  
Danae Wilson: if, the NTIA isn't funded. So, in those, on the website, it shows that those BSLs are counted, so you then can't use those BSLs, even if they're unfunded.

622  
01:35:29.410 --> 01:35:33.759

Danae Wilson: And I'll use Nez Perce as the example, because we were in curing under Round 2.

623  
01:35:33.810 --> 01:35:51.540  
Danae Wilson: When that funding was pulled back, we now have to find other ways to fund that project, and to include them in BEAD, we had to petition that that map be updated quickly, right? And so, so that puts the onus and burden on the Tribe when these are federal resources.

624  
01:35:51.540 --> 01:36:01.730  
Danae Wilson: So it would help us to reduce administrative burdens if we knew what some of those processes were up front, and what some of those CATEXs are ahead of time for EAs.

625  
01:36:03.490 --> 01:36:04.440  
Danae Wilson: Thank you.

626  
01:36:06.950 --> 01:36:09.820  
Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you, Danae. I think Chris is next.

627  
01:36:12.630 --> 01:36:15.000  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Alright, hey everyone, thank you again.

628  
01:36:15.430 --> 01:36:31.719  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Boy, I really agree with everything that she just said, around timing and the duplication of served locations and BSLs, and I would even I mean, I get it's a hard problem, and one that we're all, again, very aware of and work very hard on.

629  
01:36:31.960 --> 01:36:39.580  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): But really, I would believe until a location is actually served, it shouldn't be counted as served. I get that creates a knot

630  
01:36:39.860 --> 01:36:40.710  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): on

631  
01:36:40.920 --> 01:36:54.219  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): on your end, on if it's been awarded, and that sort of thing. So, I don't have a great solution, I apologize, but I agree, certainly on the timing and BSLs, and it is nice we have BSLs now, but

632  
01:36:56.960 --> 01:37:11.440  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): until they're served, they're not served. So a couple things on this. I'll hit on indirect again, just because it seems like good sport today. You know, if we have, we've got some pretty significant staff, dedicated to,

633  
01:37:11.700 --> 01:37:19.070

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): complying and aligning with all of the requirements, and I do feel the requirements are

634  
01:37:19.240 --> 01:37:26.940  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): required. So having a little bit more indirect to deal with that, would let us put, more resources on that, and

635  
01:37:27.130 --> 01:37:30.379  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Would thereby, reduce the administrative burden.

636  
01:37:32.530 --> 01:37:38.880  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): The timing, no-cost extension, I've already talked about that. I did want to specifically bring up

637  
01:37:39.170 --> 01:37:46.510  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): NEPA agreements with other federal agencies, the FCC specifically. When we build a tower, we need to do two

638  
01:37:46.750 --> 01:37:51.010  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): environmental assessments, one with NTIA and one with FCC.

639  
01:37:51.120 --> 01:38:01.060  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): We used all the same paperwork and work with almost all the same people. We've got a great system in place now, but it does seem like a pretty obvious double

640  
01:38:01.560 --> 01:38:06.230  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): double back, double, double, requirement there.

641  
01:38:07.190 --> 01:38:20.630  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): One thing you can't really do much about, maybe, and again, this is why I bring it up, is because you know what you can do more than I do. So local permitting has been a tremendous burden on us, more so than

642  
01:38:21.470 --> 01:38:26.730  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): any other type of permitting. The Telecommunications Act

643  
01:38:27.100 --> 01:38:34.309  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): kind of comes back to my ATC situation. The Telecommunication Act was written specifically for providers that are providing

644  
01:38:34.460 --> 01:38:39.280  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): voice, not to get into all the all the fun acronyms that are involved in that.

645  
01:38:39.550 --> 01:38:51.240

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And so when we go to build a tower, we have had some communities push back on, that we don't have protection under the Telecommunications Act to build these towers, and

646

01:38:51.660 --> 01:38:56.649

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): It's a real problem, and so some sort of

647

01:38:57.190 --> 01:39:11.599

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): program to either well, I mean, well, I'm making wishes, to, include, again, Tribal broadband, operators, to have the same protection that commercial

648

01:39:12.570 --> 01:39:30.240

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): wireless providers have to build those towers, or even providers that are building towers for carriers. Which, you know, on our towers, there's enough room there for other folks, but we don't seem to get the same protection that the commercial

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01:39:31.280 --> 01:39:35.349

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): builders, get. So the more that,

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01:39:36.170 --> 01:39:43.060

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): We could look at the whole stack of permitting, and reduce that burden. We spend a great deal of time at City Hall.

651

01:39:43.370 --> 01:39:52.580

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Dealing with that, so And, I agreed with everyone else's comments. Thank you.

652

01:39:56.160 --> 01:40:01.999

Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you, Chris. And I don't see any more hands, Julia. Oh, Will Micklin.

Commented [KJ18]: Micklin

653

01:40:04.090 --> 01:40:05.899

Maci Morin: Hey, Will, you're ready to go.

654

01:40:07.410 --> 01:40:08.699

Will Micklin: Hi, can you hear me?

655

01:40:09.080 --> 01:40:09.900

Maci Morin: Yes, we can.

656

01:40:10.440 --> 01:40:16.260

Will Micklin: Thank you, Will Micklin, Vice President, Central Council, Tlingit and Haida Tribes of Alaska.

Commented [YE19]: Micklin

657

01:40:16.840 --> 01:40:25.589

Will Micklin: Chris Copley has been, speaking for Tlingit and Haida today, and I was in an environment, I couldn't speak, so,

658

01:40:26.630 --> 01:40:30.509

Will Micklin: Thank you for Chris taking up the baton here.

659

01:40:30.750 --> 01:40:36.619

Will Micklin: And I greatly appreciate, Danae Wilson's comments and Chairman Hill's comments.

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01:40:36.940 --> 01:40:41.929

Will Micklin: and others. Very important. I just have a quick comment here on this topic.

661

01:40:42.110 --> 01:40:47.639

Will Micklin: There are consequences to the cap on administrative expenses.

662

01:40:48.050 --> 01:40:58.579

Will Micklin: There's really a knock-on consequence here, in that it is in trying to shave as thin as possible

663

01:40:59.000 --> 01:41:00.279

Will Micklin: those costs.

664

01:41:00.740 --> 01:41:05.299

Will Micklin: And apply as much,

665

01:41:05.950 --> 01:41:08.729

Will Micklin: Money and effort into the

666

01:41:08.830 --> 01:41:21.560

Will Micklin: actual implementation work and sustainability means that We really have to,

667

01:41:23.370 --> 01:41:29.380

Will Micklin: Hire folks that have both technical and administrative experience.

668

01:41:29.530 --> 01:41:33.220

Will Micklin: Which sometimes is not a Tribal person.

669

01:41:33.550 --> 01:41:42.500

Will Micklin: We're fortunate having Chris and others on our staff who are Tribal Citizens who have that expertise.

670

01:41:43.170 --> 01:41:49.109

Will Micklin: But it really concentrates into Oversight or administrative positions.

671  
01:41:49.450 --> 01:41:55.560  
Will Micklin: A requirement that folks also have that technical ability to actually work on

672  
01:41:55.670 --> 01:42:00.940  
Will Micklin: project implementation. We can't afford just to have an admin person.

673  
01:42:01.760 --> 01:42:04.789  
Will Micklin: It also means that we,

674  
01:42:04.970 --> 01:42:11.249  
Will Micklin: generally have to rely on our HR services, for example, with the Tribe.

675  
01:42:11.370 --> 01:42:15.140  
Will Micklin: Even though the, the hiring

676  
01:42:15.570 --> 01:42:28.100  
Will Micklin: imperative for our projects can be very near-term. We need to bring on a position, we need to bring them on quickly. That's not the typical posture for

677  
01:42:28.530 --> 01:42:39.969  
Will Micklin: a Tribe's HR Department. It really doesn't work under that kind of near-term imperative.

678  
01:42:40.410 --> 01:42:44.320  
Will Micklin: We also, in having folks with

679  
01:42:44.460 --> 01:42:55.839  
Will Micklin: Both a technical as well as administrative portfolio means that they likely don't have the kind of expertise that we need to apply that would further reduce costs.

680  
01:42:56.120 --> 01:43:01.569  
Will Micklin: Like, in buying land, determining how to hold land.

681  
01:43:01.700 --> 01:43:05.960  
Will Micklin: Or, or actually, at the end of that.

682  
01:43:06.120 --> 01:43:17.789  
Will Micklin: conversation is, likely the Tribal broadband effort probably should be a subsidiary of the Tribe, an arm of the Tribe, rather than working as a department under

683  
01:43:18.180 --> 01:43:22.279  
Will Micklin: The Tribal chairman, or our, our council.

684

01:43:23.460 --> 01:43:30.150

Will Micklin: So, it's really difficult to affect that and, realize those further

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01:43:30.600 --> 01:43:38.729

Will Micklin: Improvements in administration and cost efficiency when you just don't have

686

01:43:39.230 --> 01:43:46.340

Will Micklin: enough, admin costs under your, allowed to affect those changes.

687

01:43:46.740 --> 01:43:47.990

Will Micklin: So,

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01:43:48.910 --> 01:43:56.300

Will Micklin: it's more of a nuanced argument, but it's it is a real consequence, and if we had a better

689

01:43:56.690 --> 01:44:02.300

Will Micklin: access to more admin funds.

690

01:44:02.420 --> 01:44:10.050

Will Micklin: And support, then we would improve our efficiency and our effectiveness and our ability to really

691

01:44:10.220 --> 01:44:18.360

Will Micklin: Manage costs, right down to the penny, which we attempt to do, but we attempt to do it under

692

01:44:18.950 --> 01:44:23.280

Will Micklin: the limitations that that we operate under, so

693

01:44:23.700 --> 01:44:25.880

Will Micklin: I hope that's helpful. Thank you.

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01:44:31.070 --> 01:44:32.090

Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you, Will.

695

01:44:33.740 --> 01:44:35.160

Margaret Gutierrez: Anyone else?

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01:44:40.520 --> 01:44:59.300

Margaret Gutierrez: I do not see any more hands. I think at this point, what I'd like to do before we continue is take a quick 5-minute break, give everybody a chance to stretch, use the restroom. If this goes like the last one went, we'll be here for 4 hours. And we didn't take a break, so I wanted to give everybody the opportunity this time. When we return, we'll move to the fifth topic.

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01:51:11.490 --> 01:51:15.300

Margaret Gutierrez: All right, thank you for allowing us the 5-minute break.

698

01:51:17.380 --> 01:51:19.339

Margaret Gutierrez: We will get started.

699

01:51:24.950 --> 01:51:42.970

Margaret Gutierrez: So, next we're going to turn to technology advancements. Recent advancements in LEO, or Low Earth Orbit Satellite and Fixed Wireless Broadband Technologies have expanded the range of connectivity options available to Tribal communities, particularly in areas where traditional terrestrial infrastructure may be difficult or cost prohibitive to deploy.

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01:51:43.150 --> 01:51:48.990

Margaret Gutierrez: As these technologies continue to evolve, NTIA is interested in understanding how they are being used in practice.

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01:51:49.110 --> 01:52:01.650

Margaret Gutierrez: and how they are impacting broadband connectivity across Indian Country. We recognize that technology decisions are highly context-specific, and that Tribes are best positioned to assess which solutions are appropriate for their communities, geography, and long-term goals.

702

01:52:01.750 --> 01:52:13.020

Margaret Gutierrez: With that in mind, we're seeking Tribal input on how advancements in LEO satellite and fixed wireless technologies have affected connectivity outcomes, including reliability, performance, affordability, and sustainability.

703

01:52:13.600 --> 01:52:23.990

Margaret Gutierrez: NTIA is also interested in whether additional or more up-to-date information on satellite and wireless technologies would be helpful in supporting Tribal decision-making and evaluation of broadband options.

704

01:52:23.990 --> 01:52:33.699

Margaret Gutierrez: We welcome your experiences, observations, and recommendations, including both benefits and limitations, to help inform how NTIA can better support technology-informed decision-making moving forward.

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01:52:33.880 --> 01:52:43.560

Margaret Gutierrez: With that, here are our questions. First, how have recent advancements in LEO satellite and fixed wireless broadband technologies impacted broadband connectivity in Indian Country?

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01:52:43.690 --> 01:52:52.779

Margaret Gutierrez: Second, would additional information on the latest advancements and improvements in satellite and or wireless technologies assist Tribes in evaluating broadband technology options?

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01:52:55.390 --> 01:52:57.470

Margaret Gutierrez: And with that, we will open it up.

708  
01:53:00.340 --> 01:53:05.130  
Maci Morin: First hand I see is Chris Cropley, so you are now unmuted.

709  
01:53:05.880 --> 01:53:15.100  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): All right, thank you very much. You know, I was here in the last one, and some folks brought up some cons of LEO, and

710  
01:53:15.420 --> 01:53:22.319  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): I guess I would like to say I don't necessarily disagree with that, and I thought they brought up some great points. I'm not really in

711  
01:53:23.200 --> 01:53:25.210  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): a position to say a lot

712  
01:53:25.380 --> 01:53:34.849  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): of cons, I just don't want to discount the cons out there, because I think there was some really interesting talk around long-term cost and

713  
01:53:35.200 --> 01:53:47.290  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): you know, we've we have not had LEO up here for very long, but it's been very transformative of our program, and once again, the NTIA demonstrated their

714  
01:53:48.700 --> 01:53:57.410  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): intelligence and foresight and ability to work the problem. And, when we applied, LEO was,

715  
01:53:58.080 --> 01:53:59.359  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): an idea.

716  
01:53:59.470 --> 01:54:11.640  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And now it's a reality, and we've been able to shift into that and lean into that, and have done some pretty incredible things. We bond multiple high-performance terminals together to bring

717  
01:54:12.390 --> 01:54:31.339  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): greater than gig, connectivity to our 5G towers, which then, does create independent utilities. We landslides are a big problem up here. The cost of running fiber between towers costs more than the towers, and

718  
01:54:31.660 --> 01:54:40.039  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): it's really been an overall net gain for us to provide

719  
01:54:40.560 --> 01:54:44.270

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Service to the unserved and underserved.

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01:54:44.550 --> 01:54:54.759

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): It comes back to sustainability, the O&M and the backhaul on it is expensive. It's

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01:54:55.160 --> 01:55:10.099

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): not necessarily more expensive than running undersea fiber and lighting that up, or that sort of thing up here, where it's tens, if not more, of millions of dollars to bring back all to these communities.

722

01:55:10.550 --> 01:55:13.869

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And as the technology matures, we've seen

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01:55:15.460 --> 01:55:24.790

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): significant improvements in, latency, throughput, speed, bandwidth, whatever, whatever

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01:55:24.950 --> 01:55:26.899

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): label we want to put on it.

725

01:55:27.250 --> 01:55:36.680

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): While I'm up here making wishes, it would be nice to see a contract

726

01:55:36.900 --> 01:55:42.640

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): you know, we see it with StarShield, where the DoD has an agreement with LEO providers.

727

01:55:42.920 --> 01:55:45.889

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): To provide a certain level of service.

728

01:55:46.260 --> 01:55:59.139

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): and to provide a service agreement that's compatible with their need. And when we look at backhaul, you know, having things like data caps or paying per

729

01:55:59.440 --> 01:56:04.869

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): bit isn't necessarily the best model

730

01:56:05.020 --> 01:56:10.580

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): for reselling, or re-providing, or using it as a backhaul.

731

01:56:10.760 --> 01:56:19.160

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And we've seen the BEAD program, award across multiple states.

732

01:56:19.300 --> 01:56:21.699

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Many millions of dollars, if not

733

01:56:23.830 --> 01:56:42.610

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): well, many millions, I'll leave it at that, because I don't have real numbers in front of me, and I know how important it is to be accurate, or vague, where we could have a negotiated contract, and even if we do have a negotiated contract, I, as always, want the door to swing both ways, where we could negotiate our own contract as well.

734

01:56:42.830 --> 01:56:48.669

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): I've seen where GSA pricing and open market pricing, can be two different things.

735

01:56:48.810 --> 01:56:58.900

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): So and, I think we should encourage other providers, besides the obvious one, and now that the technology's been proven.

736

01:56:59.200 --> 01:57:05.310

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): So, I think NTIA has done a great job, again, of flexibility, keeping the door open.

737

01:57:05.780 --> 01:57:13.440

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And I think we should we should encourage that while being cognitive of the limitations around

738

01:57:16.000 --> 01:57:17.900

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): it. Thank you very much.

739

01:57:27.890 --> 01:57:34.899

Maci Morin: Thank you. Next we will call on Chairman Hill, followed up by Danae. Chairman Hill, you're unmuted.

740

01:57:36.320 --> 01:57:49.029

Chairman Tehassi Hill: All right, thank you. My responses to these two questions will be quite brief. Fixed wireless has enabled multiple households in the rural area of the Oneida Nation Reservation to access reliable internet service.

741

01:57:49.200 --> 01:57:53.399

Chairman Tehassi Hill: Whereas previously, only limited DSL connectivity was available.

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01:57:54.020 --> 01:58:14.019

Chairman Tehassi Hill: And the wireless technology are currently in use throughout the Oneida Reservation. While they provide a temporary stopgap solution, the limited speed and bandwidth makes them insufficient for activities that require a stable, high-capacity connection, such as video conferencing. Thank you.

743

01:58:20.030 --> 01:58:21.590

Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you, Chairman. Danae?

744  
01:58:25.860 --> 01:58:34.070  
Danae Wilson: Thank you. I have a couple of comments here. The first one is, in terms of satellite, we really need to separate that out as a wireless technology.

745  
01:58:34.070 --> 01:58:57.749  
Danae Wilson: from fixed wireless, because satellite, has limitations and higher costs, and so when we think about deploying satellite in Nez Perce country, we think about utilizing that where we can do, bursts of data or data packets, because the, continual connection is so costly. So we just need to, think about the fact that, that those,

746  
01:58:57.750 --> 01:59:02.769  
Danae Wilson: are not necessarily the same. They while they are both wireless.

747  
01:59:02.770 --> 01:59:13.700  
Danae Wilson: They do not deploy equally. And, so, in terms of satellite, we also have to think about, dead zones. And so,

748  
01:59:13.890 --> 01:59:17.799  
Danae Wilson: I always use the scenario of your satellite radio.

749  
01:59:17.830 --> 01:59:31.530  
Danae Wilson: Here in Idaho, we have a lot of draws and river roads, and when you're on the river road, you definitely will not have satellite radio continuously, because the hills

750  
01:59:31.530 --> 01:59:39.410  
Danae Wilson: the trees and the water can all impact, that satellite delivery. So when we think about, satellite

751  
01:59:39.410 --> 01:59:49.270  
Danae Wilson: we really do need to separate away from wireless. Wireless does have some of those same restrictions, however, you can fix that by adding additional

752  
01:59:49.270 --> 01:59:59.079  
Danae Wilson: towers or additional connection points. So, here in Idaho, we deploy what are called neighborhood solutions, where if one home can be served.

753  
01:59:59.090 --> 02:00:07.930  
Danae Wilson: We can serve adjacent homes, or homes that wouldn't have a line of sight. So, fixed wireless is truly a

754  
02:00:07.930 --> 02:00:22.070  
Danae Wilson: a line of sight to the tower. And even if we consider cellular as a wireless technology, cellular 2 is a line of sight, or within proximity of a tower, and it's

755  
02:00:22.070 --> 02:00:23.969  
Danae Wilson: it's connectivity, so

756  
02:00:24.440 --> 02:00:34.660  
Danae Wilson: While we can talk about, advancements and improvements, it still doesn't necessarily mean that the costs have come down.

757  
02:00:34.800 --> 02:00:38.060  
Danae Wilson: And we can't talk about satellite without costs.

758  
02:00:38.080 --> 02:00:55.729  
Danae Wilson: And it isn't the upfront cost, it's the ongoing, repetitive costs that consumers are forced to pay. There is no government backhaul contract with any of the current LEO satellite operators today. So I can't buy, at a discount, backhaul from a satellite company

759  
02:00:55.730 --> 02:01:04.860  
Danae Wilson: They want that higher cost per minute, per megabit. They want that higher cost, repetitive billing system to

760  
02:01:04.860 --> 02:01:07.920  
Danae Wilson: to get the most bang for their buck. Obviously.

761  
02:01:07.930 --> 02:01:15.529  
Danae Wilson: Launching satellites is a huge cost to the company who's launching them, but on the back end, the longevity

762  
02:01:15.730 --> 02:01:26.259  
Danae Wilson: in order for me to deploy that, I have to think about those reoccurring costs to the Tribe and to its Tribal programs. Ultimately, many of those are federal grants.

763  
02:01:26.260 --> 02:01:42.160  
Danae Wilson: So, we just need to think about, are we displacing federal broadband funding for upfront investment in technology that can be built upon and expanded upon for quick, fast, easy,

764  
02:01:42.160 --> 02:01:49.640  
Danae Wilson: and transfer that cost to the consumer, or to the federal grant or contract that we have in terms of paying for that service. So

765  
02:01:49.640 --> 02:02:07.579  
Danae Wilson: I really think these are two separate categories, and I don't necessarily think they belong on the same slide. That's my first observation. But more importantly, in terms of fixed wireless, I think there's a lot that's happened in this space that has been very advantageous to Tribes.

766  
02:02:07.580 --> 02:02:18.320

Danae Wilson: Nez Perce has been able to deploy wireless rings around its reservation using satellite for the backhaul. In the TBCP Round 2 application, it was to connect all those smaller

Commented [KJ20]: Perce

767  
02:02:18.320 --> 02:02:23.690  
Danae Wilson: fiber rings to one backhaul, connecting all the communities in between.

768  
02:02:24.420 --> 02:02:40.919  
Danae Wilson: when we think about what this will mean transferring to BEAD, if that's even possible. How much does that impact the cost? Not just to the Tribe, but to those communities? How much of that match, and how much of

769  
02:02:41.010 --> 02:02:56.280  
Danae Wilson: that line of credit is going to impact the deployment that can be done, and will we still be forced to rely on fixed wireless, which can't do the same amount of backhaul that, fiber can do? So, I just really think,

770  
02:02:56.280 --> 02:03:05.150  
Danae Wilson: we need to keep the technologies in their lane, and they both have pros and cons.

771  
02:03:05.290 --> 02:03:15.619  
Danae Wilson: But in some cases, the cons outweigh the deployment, and we should be really frank about that, because we're being asked, how do we spread these dollars further?

772  
02:03:16.030 --> 02:03:28.119  
Danae Wilson: Well, the reality is, do we spread it further today, or do we bank it and spread those dollars to grants and contracts who are also being reduced on the back end? Thank you.

773  
02:03:31.700 --> 02:03:32.880  
Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you, Danae.

774  
02:03:34.070 --> 02:03:35.470  
Margaret Gutierrez: I think Rick

775  
02:03:35.470 --> 02:03:39.299  
Maci Morin: Yes, Rick is next. Rick, you're unmuted.

776  
02:03:40.040 --> 02:03:55.739  
Rick Noonan: Okay, thank you. I really appreciate Danae's comments. There's some things I wasn't aware about with LEO and its serviceability. One of the things I wanted to just quickly address again, just specifically for Santee.

777  
02:03:55.810 --> 02:04:03.949  
Rick Noonan: is that, you know, I mentioned earlier that we did deploy one and a half towers to try to get fixed wireless to some members.

778  
02:04:04.030 --> 02:04:14.340  
Rick Noonan: We looked at LEO as an alternative, and again, I'm not sure this pertains to what NTIA might be able to do, but,

779  
02:04:14.550 --> 02:04:22.359  
Rick Noonan: we wanted to be able to look at, an area that couldn't be served by our fixed wireless and use LEO as an option.

780  
02:04:22.510 --> 02:04:29.770  
Rick Noonan: And I had a direct conversation with some members from SpaceX in a result of that conversation.

781  
02:04:29.950 --> 02:04:38.909  
Rick Noonan: one of the things I proposed was, you know, as they seek to come into areas that are unserved or underserved in Tribal lands.

782  
02:04:39.110 --> 02:04:50.190  
Rick Noonan: what does the Tribal nation get? And I offered up a plan where maybe they could get some residual monthly percentage of revenue, or

783  
02:04:50.190 --> 02:05:02.900  
Rick Noonan: you know, place, because we are an ETC, we have our own billing, could we use their service and get a wholesale price? Or could we do anything that would maybe generate a little revenue for the Tribal Entity?

784  
02:05:02.940 --> 02:05:13.160  
Rick Noonan: And they were not interested in doing that. So, with regards to just getting service to a member, which, of course, is the

785  
02:05:13.470 --> 02:05:24.729  
Rick Noonan: is the ultimate, role of TBCP. It is a viable option in some areas, you know, that we've had, but, like,

786  
02:05:24.830 --> 02:05:39.409  
Rick Noonan: Danae brought up, there are some obstacles that I was not aware of it. Plus, some members that are on that have been hit with the variable cost. It's not a fixed cost. If you're doing a lot of gaming and a lot of stuff, you will pay more for that service, so.

787  
02:05:39.510 --> 02:05:59.180  
Rick Noonan: And then my only other comment was, I wasn't sure, with this whole duplication of funding, granted that's funds that are given by the federal government, but if there's an area where you can now be served by over 25.3 through satellite, how does that affect our duplication of services issues? So,

788  
02:05:59.360 --> 02:06:18.390  
Rick Noonan: I think that's all I wanted to comment on that. So again, I'm not sure what NTIA can do to help with that, but I think we should ask these folks that are

coming into Tribal lands to take and provide service if there's any way to receive some sort of a revenue, either through a cash receipts tax or

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02:06:18.390 --> 02:06:30.799

Rick Noonan: a new line item on the universal services bill, something that could, perhaps give some additional funding to help for the folks that need it the worst. So, thank you very much for allowing me to speak.

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02:06:38.410 --> 02:06:42.519

Maci Morin: Great, and next we will go to Godfrey. You are unmuted.

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02:06:44.100 --> 02:06:50.199

Godfrey Enjady: Alright, thank you again. Just to piggyback what Danae was saying, too, is the fact that it will

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02:06:50.280 --> 02:07:04.150

Godfrey Enjady: solve a lot of issues for people that are way out on the LEO satellite technology. But the other point is that at the end of the day, once you have your broadband network built out, you know, what can you do with it?

793

02:07:05.880 --> 02:07:16.919

Godfrey Enjady: The biggest part of the LEO technology is that it's not on a it's on their satellite network, so it's not a local network, one that you can try to build.

794

02:07:17.800 --> 02:07:33.849

Godfrey Enjady: to do certain things that you want for each Tribe. It comes to the point to where digital sovereignty is an issue, especially going through their networks, and once you have a wireless hybrid network.

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02:07:33.980 --> 02:07:41.280

Godfrey Enjady: You're able to control the data, and you get to see where it goes.

796

02:07:41.960 --> 02:07:56.040

Godfrey Enjady: Whereas, when you have LEO technology, you don't. I mean, you're riding on their network. They have their own earth stations on how to deliver that broadband interconnection.

797

02:07:56.280 --> 02:08:11.539

Godfrey Enjady: So, and you're not the Tribe is usually not in control of that. So, eventually, if Tribes are looking at AI advancement on Tribal reservations, you want those on closed networks, those are some of the things and issues that need to be

798

02:08:11.910 --> 02:08:25.440

Godfrey Enjady: looked at, just to be sure that it provides the best services it can. And for those way-out areas where you just there's no way to get any kind of information, the LEO technology works the best. So, those are my comments.

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02:08:33.650 --> 02:08:41.270

Maci Morin: Thank you very much. I don't see any other hands, so last call for hands before we move on to the next topic.

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02:08:47.880 --> 02:08:51.140

Maci Morin: Seeing none, I'll pass it back to Margaret and Angie.

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02:08:53.350 --> 02:08:54.420

Angela Thi Bennett: Okay.

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02:08:54.550 --> 02:09:08.180

Angela Thi Bennett: All right, so next we're going to turn to broadband adoption challenges. NTIA recognizes that access to broadband infrastructure alone does not always result in meaningful connectivity.

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02:09:08.360 --> 02:09:14.470

Angela Thi Bennett: Adoption is influenced by a range of factors that can vary significantly across Tribal communities.

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02:09:14.730 --> 02:09:26.520

Angela Thi Bennett: Understanding these barriers is critical to shaping programs like TBCP and Native Entities in ways that effectively support Tribes in achieving sustained and meaningful broadband use.

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02:09:26.800 --> 02:09:46.449

Angela Thi Bennett: With this topic, NTIA is seeking Tribal input on the challenges affecting broadband adoption on Tribal lands. These may include factors such as affordability, availability of devices, digital skills and training, cultural relevance, trust, or other community-specific considerations.

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02:09:46.810 --> 02:09:59.049

Angela Thi Bennett: NTIA is particularly interested in hearing where adoption challenges persist, even when infrastructure is available, and what strategies or support may help address those gaps.

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02:09:59.140 --> 02:10:09.420

Angela Thi Bennett: With this context, we pose this question for open discussion. What challenges exist with respect to Tribal broadband adoption on Tribal lands?

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02:10:18.890 --> 02:10:23.579

Maci Morin: First hand I see is Chris's hand. Chris, you are unmuted.

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02:10:24.750 --> 02:10:26.220

Chris Croyley (under Rain Felkl): Thank you very much.

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02:10:27.320 --> 02:10:34.620

Chris Croyley (under Rain Felkl): I will keep this one brief, I promise. Affordability, affordability, affordability. And, I think some

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02:10:34.940 --> 02:10:39.559

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): It just really broke my heart when we saw the ACP program, dissolve.

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02:10:39.850 --> 02:10:46.339

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And, I think any way that we could we could get support for an ACP 2.0,

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02:10:46.460 --> 02:10:54.329

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Whether that's specific to Tribes or Tribal citizens, even And making that as agnostic.

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02:10:54.560 --> 02:10:59.949

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): and, available the better. So that those are my comments.

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02:11:00.290 --> 02:11:02.510

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Thank you, or our comments.

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02:11:02.510 --> 02:11:06.299

Angela Thi Bennett: So, Chris, just kind of following up on that,

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02:11:06.800 --> 02:11:09.269

Angela Thi Bennett: What were some of the challenges that

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02:11:09.900 --> 02:11:17.189

Angela Thi Bennett: you experienced, and what are some recommendations for improvement? Because we're talking subsidy programs, right?

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02:11:17.190 --> 02:11:28.579

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Yeah, yeah, absolutely. You know, just another history lesson when we started, 4 years ago, when it was the what was it, the ECP? Or

820

02:11:28.690 --> 02:11:42.540

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): EVB? I don't know. And the, and then the ACP. We, you know, we did a lot of the spreadsheeting based on the \$75 a month, and again, 4 years ago, \$75 then is not \$75 today.

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02:11:43.210 --> 02:11:53.919

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): That affordability being able to, we get back to sustainability, and that that was a way we could make, that spreadsheet float

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02:11:54.390 --> 02:12:04.280

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): with having the \$75 a month per household based on the 150% of the poverty level. So

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02:12:06.370 --> 02:12:10.079

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): not having that has been incredibly challenging.

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02:12:11.700 --> 02:12:18.660

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And finding replacements for that, even with Lifeline. Again, we'd have to be ETC. The

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02:12:18.950 --> 02:12:28.379

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): the net on that is isn't there, and it's significantly less, per consumer. So, it,

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02:12:28.900 --> 02:12:31.580

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): it really choked

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02:12:32.030 --> 02:12:41.829

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): resources to the program on sustainability, and when I go to the communities, and I sit down and speak with the people face-to-face.

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02:12:42.240 --> 02:12:50.740

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): everybody has, you know, their questions that they ask, but the one that always gets asked that seems that is the most important is, how much is this gonna cost?

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02:12:50.870 --> 02:13:00.890

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And if our program is \$10 less, even if we're, you know, breaking even and being sustainable, and the next guy is

830

02:13:01.450 --> 02:13:09.100

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): \$10 more. Or worse, you know, up here, we get into price wars, because you can

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02:13:09.950 --> 02:13:21.800

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): price folks out, and, across industries. I'm not speaking in a specific industry here, just as an example, where a larger organization can't afford to lose money,

832

02:13:22.220 --> 02:13:25.410

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): and a, a smaller, newer,

833

02:13:26.830 --> 02:13:29.860

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): with not as deep pockets,

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02:13:30.080 --> 02:13:33.249

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): can't, can't afford to, to take that hit.

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02:13:33.350 --> 02:13:36.760

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And, and so we, we see that. So the,

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02:13:38.070 --> 02:13:53.959

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): the huge challenge on adoption, I mean, you brought up a few other things, those are great, but if people can't afford it, as a matter of fact, I always felt that affordability should count, and I think, again, you guys have reflected some of this as part of unserved or underserved.

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02:13:54.080 --> 02:14:13.479

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): I'll also point out, you know, I don't always necessarily agree with 150%, and I think ACP did a good job of creating some other conditions where people would qualify for that, but I think the larger and the broader of a program like that, a subsidy, would be,

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02:14:14.280 --> 02:14:21.459

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): is the key to all of this, to getting people signed up. Like you said, you know, if we have all this, even if you have

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02:14:21.600 --> 02:14:29.130

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): multiple options if you can't afford it, or aren't aware of your affordability options. We spend a lot of time and energy

840

02:14:29.880 --> 02:14:38.580

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Letting people know about the program, getting them signed up for it, which had its own administrative burden, and then the program,

841

02:14:38.750 --> 02:14:46.379

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): went away. So Yeah, that's, I think this one is super important to me on

842

02:14:46.700 --> 02:14:49.310

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): on I think it hits all levels.

843

02:14:50.200 --> 02:14:52.500

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): for folks. Thank you.

844

02:14:53.140 --> 02:15:06.729

Margaret Gutierrez: Chris, can you give us an idea on cost for, broadband in Alaska? I think this has been one of our conversations internally, is, like, the variation of what it costs to have

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02:15:07.670 --> 02:15:21.340

Margaret Gutierrez: person A have service in the lower 48 versus what it costs to have services in Alaska, and in addition to that, like, where in Alaska, right? That also makes a difference, so can you talk a little bit about that?

846

02:15:21.660 --> 02:15:29.459

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Absolutely. I will, I'm gonna use some rough numbers here, so I just, you know

847

02:15:29.950 --> 02:15:43.260

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): recommend everybody goes and check these, but I'll use some very real examples. Number one, we pay less for our head-end backhaul connection at our data center in Seattle

848  
02:15:43.490 --> 02:15:51.770  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): that everything connects to exponentially less for that connection than we do for

849  
02:15:52.370 --> 02:15:57.530  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): well, I think it's 10 gig down there, and we spend

850  
02:15:57.810 --> 02:16:09.820  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): more for a 100 meg connection. Both fiber, both terrestrial fiber, both off the shelf, right from the carrier, right into our box, right in the data centers. We pay more for a 100 meg

851  
02:16:10.270 --> 02:16:19.229  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): in, Wrangle than we do for multiple gigs in Seattle, by 10F.

852  
02:16:19.870 --> 02:16:36.030  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): My personal package, I've got, two phone lines. I live in Anchorage. Quick Alaska lesson. We all love to give Alaska lessons. 700,000 people in Alaska. 300,000 of them live in Anchorage.

853  
02:16:36.370 --> 02:16:42.789  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And, you know, we're twice the size of Texas. So, the population density that we have here is

854  
02:16:44.629 --> 02:16:46.539  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): is second to none.

855  
02:16:47.809 --> 02:16:56.840  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): So I pay \$300 a month in Anchorage, I get, 2.5 gig at the house, and it includes 2 cell phones. It's about \$340 a month, about.

856  
02:16:57.559 --> 02:17:16.879  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): So that's, like, best case, right? We see in communities where we have DSL, we are not providing it, but other ones are, which is just kind of worst case, you know, about almost \$300, \$250 a month.

857  
02:17:17.000 --> 02:17:22.190  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): For that sub served Speed.

858  
02:17:23.660 --> 02:17:30.500  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl):: So we're seeing it on the backhaul side, we're seeing it On the consumer side, and

859

02:17:30.730 --> 02:17:38.870

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): you know, we talk about Starlink, the Starlink coming in at, you know, 80, 90 bucks a month, and in some communities, it's even less.

860

02:17:39.430 --> 02:17:42.249

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): It does have caps on there.

861

02:17:42.540 --> 02:17:47.740

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And it does kind of create a situation where

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02:17:48.420 --> 02:17:56.450

R Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): We are seeing some of smaller providers being priced out of providing permanent long-term infrastructure for

863

02:17:57.610 --> 02:18:14.510

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): a more affordable package, and that's where I think a subsidy that leveled the playing field, or provided those unserved and underserved folks access to, if they do live in a situation where Starlink's option, or

864

02:18:15.090 --> 02:18:24.230

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): our 5G fixed wireless is the solution, or, you know, a cable modem is the solution. I think it levels that playing field

865

02:18:24.650 --> 02:18:26.600

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): For everyone. So we are

866

02:18:27.070 --> 02:18:33.920

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And, I mean, you can go to the websites of the carriers and see what their prices are. It's; not

867

02:18:34.219 --> 02:18:36.690

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): It's not fiction, it's not unpublished.

868

02:18:36.870 --> 02:18:49.409

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): I know folks don't believe how much our milk costs in our rural communities, but it always makes the, the social media round, so it is expensive up here. We are

869

02:18:52.770 --> 02:19:00.170

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): paying more per gig, and that's one reason, when we look at satellite backhaul, It really isn't

870

02:19:00.430 --> 02:19:08.860

Rain Felkl: that out of line. In some cases, it's less expensive than buying fiber backhaul here.

871

02:19:09.000 --> 02:19:19.680

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): There is no dark fiber in Alaska. I can't buy just dark fiber. I have to pay for transport, I have to pay for DIA, and stack those. It is a

872  
02:19:20.080 --> 02:19:32.099  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): de facto monopoly in these communities, and we have carriers paying other carriers a huge premium on backhaul, and that gets passed on

873  
02:19:32.570 --> 02:19:45.530  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): to everyone. So, it's hate to paint this picture, but it's as bleak as you could probably come up with, in that from every direction, there is a pressure

874  
02:19:45.760 --> 02:19:48.660  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): for more expense.

875  
02:19:50.170 --> 02:19:54.040  
Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): We have caps, we have so that's my answer.

876  
02:19:59.470 --> 02:20:02.049  
Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you for, going down that rabbit hole with me.

877 **\*\*\*START HERE\*\*\***  
02:20:04.300 --> 02:20:07.590  
Maci Morin: Thank you. Next we'll go to Danae.

878  
02:20:08.810 --> 02:20:21.039  
Danae Wilson: Thank you. So, in the past, when we would talk about, adoption, on Tribal lands, it was written in that, that we utilize the FCC subsidy plans

879  
02:20:21.370 --> 02:20:31.769  
Danae Wilson: Right now, that subsidy's only eligible for, ETCs, and so, fixed wireless providers, or even,

880  
02:20:31.780 --> 02:20:44.980  
Danae Wilson: providers who are only Tribal providers who are only interested in providing data and not voice, they don't qualify for those programs, so the FCC rule has not changed on who's eligible for those reimbursements, only ETCs are.

881  
02:20:45.270 --> 02:21:02.390  
Danae Wilson: And, in addition to that, the digital equity funds that were available got swept up in the DEI and withdrawn. Even though, actually, it was about adoption and not about who gets access. It was just about how do you make things,

882  
02:21:03.020 --> 02:21:15.460  
Danae Wilson: how can you get as many people to adopt as possible? So, the difference between the state's NTIA digital equity, was it was non-competitive.

883  
02:21:15.700 --> 02:21:26.230

Danae Wilson: And Tribes were forced to write a letter to say if they were interested in those funds. So Tribes all across the United States submitted these letters saying, yes, we're interested in these funds.

884

02:21:26.560 --> 02:21:31.569

Danae Wilson: And then, because it was such an overwhelming response, nothing happened with those funds.

885

02:21:31.670 --> 02:21:35.399

Danae Wilson: And no plan was determined. It was TBD.

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02:21:36.080 --> 02:21:38.469

Danae Wilson: So, fast forward to today.

887

02:21:38.990 --> 02:21:48.950

Danae Wilson: it got swept up in DEI and was determined that it is no longer going to be funded, but this was really just to talk about how do we get,

888

02:21:49.140 --> 02:21:56.670

Danae Wilson: communities to adopt broadband, and what is necessary for them to adopt broadband? Is it hardware? Is it a subsidy? What is it?

889

02:21:56.800 --> 02:22:06.619

Danae Wilson: And so, so the issue now is now with that vacuum and all those funds disappearing, now how do we get people to adopt?

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02:22:07.400 --> 02:22:15.680

Danae Wilson: Well, in BEAD and in TBCP, it was a requirement that we build in the subsidy into our, our business model.

891

02:22:15.820 --> 02:22:21.010

Danae Wilson: And so, so, I want to make sure that we think about

892

02:22:21.920 --> 02:22:34.399

Danae Wilson: how we are deploying these funds. And one of the biggest things that we have to do on Tribal lands is demonstrate that the service that we're providing is just as good as, or better than.

893

02:22:34.790 --> 02:22:41.040

Danae Wilson: And we also need to think about what it takes to support that user long-term. If we offer a discount.

894

02:22:41.260 --> 02:22:59.020

Danae Wilson: to anybody to accept our services, how long do we have to carry that discount without a subsidy? So I just want to make sure we're thinking about how this fund goes out. When the Tribes were offered digital equity, it was competitive. You put us all in a boat to compete for a small amount of money.

895

02:22:59.150 --> 02:23:08.129

Danae Wilson: And, and now we have to decide how are we going to ensure that our business model can stand up, to

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02:23:08.440 --> 02:23:18.980

Danae Wilson: the withdrawal of the FCC funding. Now, that, boat has sailed, I understand that that's not even on the docket for a vote, but I, I do,

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02:23:19.580 --> 02:23:21.340

Danae Wilson: Need to caution that.

898

02:23:21.570 --> 02:23:29.940

Danae Wilson: the states will be having the same problem under BEAD. It isn't unique to Tribal lands. It is amplified in Tribal lands because

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02:23:30.160 --> 02:23:34.279

Danae Wilson: This is a dispersed population, lower incomes.

900

02:23:34.430 --> 02:23:37.689

Danae Wilson: You don't want people deciding between,

901

02:23:38.310 --> 02:23:49.790

Danae Wilson: food and medical care or internet service, which would go hand-in-hand with education and ability to work. So, I I just think making sure that we have

902

02:23:50.380 --> 02:23:54.130

Danae Wilson: Adoption in Tribal lands.

903

02:23:54.350 --> 02:24:12.379

Danae Wilson: We have to really ensure that that hard choice isn't always going to be the case. They shouldn't have to decide between medicine and broadband, or medicine and utility, or their rent. It should be, included, and we have to now plan for what it looks like to our business models.

904

02:24:12.450 --> 02:24:15.819

Danae Wilson: That that subsidy has been withdrawn. And

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02:24:15.950 --> 02:24:18.449

Danae Wilson: Since the subsidy has been withdrawn.

906

02:24:18.640 --> 02:24:35.430

Danae Wilson: what is it going to take, then, to make these networks sustainable beyond the build? And that is a significant challenge. When you factor in backhaul, this is lower 48, I mean, Alaska, you just heard, it's, completely different story, but

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02:24:35.520 --> 02:24:43.960

Danae Wilson: In the lower 48, we just really have to think about what does that mean, and how can we get partners to come to the table

908  
02:24:43.960 --> 02:24:56.809  
Danae Wilson: like providers who would offer a discount for, backhaul where it's necessary? And is there an incentive that can be, utilized? What levers can be pulled at other federal agencies

909  
02:24:56.810 --> 02:25:03.749  
Danae Wilson: To help entice carriers to offer a backhaul discount to Tribes.

Commented [KJ21]: backhaul

910  
02:25:04.510 --> 02:25:05.350  
Danae Wilson: Thanks.

911  
02:25:07.750 --> 02:25:28.779  
Angela Thi Bennett: Hey, Danae, thanks a lot for your comments. I did want to kind of also maybe clarify that, you know, as Margaret kind of gave the introduction around the this Tribal consultation is not only to help inform the TPCP program, but also to inform that Native Entity set-aside program under the Digital Equity Act of 2021.

912  
02:25:29.270 --> 02:25:31.040  
Angela Thi Bennett: So,

913  
02:25:31.290 --> 02:25:42.180  
Angela Thi Bennett: we'll be focusing those funds on Native Entities specifically, so as you, you know, kind of shared around affordability, if you can also kind of talk about how

914  
02:25:42.180 --> 02:25:53.289  
Angela Thi Bennett: You know, the need for, you know, digital skills or even availability of devices can even, you know, help with adoption, on Tribal lands, from your experience?

915  
02:25:55.210 --> 02:25:59.250  
Danae Wilson: Yeah, so I think, in terms of adoption,

916  
02:25:59.960 --> 02:26:08.620  
Danae Wilson: One of the biggest barriers that we've seen is that once we get devices in the home, let's a home with children.

917  
02:26:08.760 --> 02:26:16.300  
Danae Wilson: As opposed to a, home that has no school-age children in it, or college-age children in the home.

918  
02:26:16.400 --> 02:26:24.320  
Danae Wilson: That home with children is going to prioritize broadband right up there with the utility bill and rent, or their mortgage payment.

919

02:26:24.410 --> 02:26:41.369

Danae Wilson: Because it's so critical to the success of those children in school. When you have a home that doesn't have any school-age children, the likelihood I'll take our senior population in Tribal country, if in any country, if you take a senior,

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02:26:41.550 --> 02:26:48.010

Danae Wilson: home that has no school-age children. They're gonna prioritize their medication over broadband.

921

02:26:48.060 --> 02:26:55.779

Danae Wilson: And so, what is the, balancing act there? And I think you'll find that it'll be different all across the board.

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02:26:55.810 --> 02:27:02.910

Danae Wilson: But for the most part, your homes without school-aged children, whether it's college or K-12,

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02:27:02.920 --> 02:27:21.919

Danae Wilson: Those, homes will prioritize broadband because their students need it. They can't be successful without it, and so that will be a priority over those homes who don't have that same necessity. And then we have to get past the skill set, right? Like, so

924

02:27:22.160 --> 02:27:38.510

Danae Wilson: our, senior citizens here on Nez Perce, we try to do, training on fraud alerts, on accessing websites and social media, and how they get their information

Commented [KJ22]: Perce

925

02:27:38.660 --> 02:27:42.890

Danae Wilson: what is safe to put out, and what is not safe to put out, and then

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02:27:43.370 --> 02:27:52.900

Danae Wilson: We work really hard with our senior programs and our law enforcement programs to marry what they're seeing on the streets to how the training is deployed.

927

02:27:53.410 --> 02:28:10.610

Danae Wilson: And so, we have a program that incorporates all of these multidisciplinary teams to address the problem of connectivity in populations, whether it be a homeless population, a senior population, or in our,

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02:28:10.880 --> 02:28:22.499

Danae Wilson: working adult population that may need, training or, take online classes to further their, their, work skills. So.

929

02:28:22.770 --> 02:28:42.560

Danae Wilson: where we lack is how do you take that transition from a home that absolutely needs the service for educational purposes to the home that it's an option? And it really goes back to how comfortable are they, and what trainings do we offer? And that's really sort of how we approach it here.

930  
02:28:47.860 --> 02:28:49.220  
Angela Thi Bennett: Thank you so much.

931  
02:28:51.520 --> 02:28:54.779  
Maci Morin: Okay, next up is Godfrey, whenever you're ready.

932  
02:28:57.150 --> 02:29:03.699  
Godfrey Enjady: Alright, so in, piggybacking off of Danae again,

933  
02:29:03.940 --> 02:29:21.630  
Godfrey Enjady: I do wear a different hat. I am the president for the National Tribal Telephone Association, and underneath that, we're taking on a new initiative this coming year. Obviously, Congress will meet again, and hopefully to the point to address universal service funds, USF.

934  
02:29:21.980 --> 02:29:38.329  
Godfrey Enjady: So, in that, there's reforms that are going to happen. So, this is an opportune time for that to happen, where Tribes need to start looking in themselves, because they can see that sustainability of these new networks

935  
02:29:38.990 --> 02:29:50.139  
Godfrey Enjady: It's gonna be a burden on Tribes, and note that Tribes are going to have to put the funds to run these companies until such a mechanism is going to be put in place to be able to,

936  
02:29:50.710 --> 02:29:52.880  
Godfrey Enjady: Take the place of what,

937  
02:29:53.140 --> 02:30:01.220  
Godfrey Enjady: Tribes have been putting into these companies. So, the sustainability factor can be solved through

938  
02:30:02.290 --> 02:30:06.970  
Godfrey Enjady: an entry for Tribes, even if it's just the ISP portion of it.

939  
02:30:07.100 --> 02:30:10.359  
Godfrey Enjady: having a reduced type of ETC,

940  
02:30:10.600 --> 02:30:17.060  
Godfrey Enjady: Being able to be a part of that, and being able to, pay for the high-cost loot portion of your networks.

941  
02:30:17.510 --> 02:30:23.719  
Godfrey Enjady: In some cases, some of those can be \$2,000 to \$3,000 per customer.

942  
02:30:24.370 --> 02:30:29.469

Godfrey Enjady: And if you had a way or a mechanism to enter that,

943  
02:30:30.540 --> 02:30:38.949  
Godfrey Enjady: this could be that mechanism to do that. So, I, myself, and other, Tribal telecoms,

944  
02:30:40.480 --> 02:30:48.950  
Godfrey Enjady: are looking at to solicit USF reforms to allow a lot of these new Tribal ISPs to enter into that, to be

945  
02:30:49.230 --> 02:30:53.480  
Godfrey Enjady: But it is a form of regulation, and it is a form, so

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02:30:54.070 --> 02:31:08.340  
Godfrey Enjady: you don't really have to go through your state, you can go directly to the FCC. Since the FCC has a nation-to-nation agreement, you can go directly to them to go for this, but we have to get legislation built for

947  
02:31:08.370 --> 02:31:18.090  
Godfrey Enjady: the understanding that Tribes can enter that, and then once that is done, USAC and FCC can help mitigate that and be able to

948  
02:31:19.430 --> 02:31:27.179  
Godfrey Enjady: put together a plan to allow Tribes to be able to use some of those funds to be able to provide for OPEX relief.

949  
02:31:27.200 --> 02:31:38.390  
Godfrey Enjady: So, Tribes I know some Tribes can probably last longer than others, but some of the poorest Tribes, probably the smallest numbers, will need that kind of help, so

950  
02:31:38.390 --> 02:31:49.470  
Godfrey Enjady: I am working on it as president of NTIA, and we're working on diligently to be able to move this forward, so there's a lot of issues, and it's a great investment that

951  
02:31:49.550 --> 02:32:07.330  
Godfrey Enjady: the U.S. has put into Tribes to build these broadband networks, but there's not really a sustainability factor to be able to help maintain that, and that relies solely on Tribes to be able to provide that funding. It's a new enterprise, and one that, it's going to be tough, so

952  
02:32:07.330 --> 02:32:12.350  
Godfrey Enjady: Trying to understand that whole, process as we move along.

953  
02:32:12.410 --> 02:32:18.779  
Godfrey Enjady: NTTA is, bound to do that, so we're working very hard, on behalf of Tribes to do that.

954  
02:32:19.070 --> 02:32:20.630  
Godfrey Enjady: That's the end of my comments.

955  
02:32:23.300 --> 02:32:24.499  
Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you, Godfrey.

956  
02:32:27.850 --> 02:32:33.239  
Maci Morin: Those are all the hands I see on this topic during a last call before we move on to Topic 7.

957  
02:32:39.690 --> 02:32:41.389  
Maci Morin: Being none, back to you all.

958  
02:32:43.780 --> 02:32:47.440  
Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you. So, next we'll turn to effective models and best practices.

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02:32:47.600 --> 02:33:06.609  
Margaret Gutierrez: NTI recognized that Tribal communities have implemented a wide range of public, private, and Tribal-led approaches to expand broadband access, and that many of these efforts have generated valuable lessons learned. Through this topic, we're seeking Tribal input on which types of projects or initiatives have been most effective in advancing broadband access on Tribal lands, and why these approaches have worked.

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02:33:06.610 --> 02:33:17.290  
Margaret Gutierrez: This includes insights on different delivery models, such as Tribal loan networks, partnerships with private providers, public-private collaborations, or other innovative approaches, as well as the conditions that supported their success.

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02:33:17.390 --> 02:33:24.490  
Margaret Gutierrez: NTIA is particularly interested in understanding best practices that can be scaled, adapted, or replicated in other Tribal communities.

962  
02:33:24.490 --> 02:33:38.529  
Margaret Gutierrez: While still respecting Tribal sovereignty, local decision-making, and unique community needs. With that context, we'd like your input on this question. What types of projects or initiatives, either public or private, have been most effective in advancing broadband access in Indian Country?

963  
02:33:53.490 --> 02:33:55.669  
Maci Morin: Alright, first we'll go to Danae.

964  
02:33:58.080 --> 02:34:13.519  
Danae Wilson: Hi, I think there's a couple of things that have been very successful in Indian Country. First, that collaboration. Where it is required and we can document, I'll use the FCC requirement for annual consultation.

965  
02:34:15.050 --> 02:34:29.629  
Danae Wilson: In many cases, that's the only requirement that we'll see. NTIA has that with BEAD, but some states are able to deploy and interpret that in their own way.

966  
02:34:29.710 --> 02:34:39.740  
Danae Wilson: Where there is a requirement for consultation and consent, that consent is the piece that forces carriers to the table.

967  
02:34:39.810 --> 02:34:57.509  
Danae Wilson: And so, I think it's really important that we have, consent language added. And then that gives, a chair at the table for Tribes, for us to identify what could be a requirement or,

968  
02:34:57.790 --> 02:35:16.899  
Danae Wilson: maybe not even a requirement, but where a partnership could be developed. And I'll use a local carrier, a small local carrier that is a USDA subsidy carrier in our area here at Nest Perse. They come to the table annually. They talk about where they're going to be building in the next year.

969  
02:35:16.960 --> 02:35:30.030  
Danae Wilson: and what that build looks like. And so, Nez Perce can then have input on where our needs are. What is our unmet need, and where do we need connectivity, and can the two marry together?

970  
02:35:30.370 --> 02:35:33.020  
Danae Wilson: The same is true for

971  
02:35:33.640 --> 02:35:47.290  
Danae Wilson: any of the cellular carriers, where there's an opportunity for us to co-locate or have co-location on our towers, having that opportunity for annual consultation has made a difference.

972  
02:35:47.390 --> 02:35:58.630  
Danae Wilson: I think that's a successful way to move it forward. Consent is critical in making sure it's not just the box that they check. And then.

973  
02:35:58.980 --> 02:36:12.249  
Danae Wilson: the one thing that I think needs to be improved upon is making sure that energy companies are required to do the same. One of the things that I think is really difficult is,

974  
02:36:12.540 --> 02:36:14.599  
Danae Wilson: Attachments on power poles.

975  
02:36:14.740 --> 02:36:28.089  
Danae Wilson: And typically, power companies, utility companies are not required to do consultation or consent on Tribal lands, but where that could be extremely beneficial to rural deployments

976  
02:36:28.090 --> 02:36:38.549  
Danae Wilson: Is adding poll attachments to the conversation, and what that poll attachment conversation would mean in terms of what it would look like for Tribes to,

977  
02:36:38.620 --> 02:36:42.530  
Danae Wilson: To, advance broadband in there.

978  
02:36:42.830 --> 02:36:52.190  
Danae Wilson: across our Tribal lands, utilizing pole attachments. That doesn't exist right now, and that's a super important piece of this conversation, because those

979  
02:36:52.390 --> 02:37:00.290  
Danae Wilson: The federal government is already paying for the deployment of those poles and that utility service, even if it's managed by a local power company.

980  
02:37:00.340 --> 02:37:15.879  
Danae Wilson: They're that's federally subsidized as well, but they're not forced to come to the table. And, and that's a real key opportunity for us to for Tribes, to say, we want to be a partner, we have pull attachments to get to these homes.

981  
02:37:15.880 --> 02:37:32.600  
Danae Wilson: what would the pole attachment look like, and is there a way for waivers of application, for waivers of insurance, or whatever the case may be, what is the process for the Tribe to attain cost-effective pole attachments? Because

982  
02:37:32.880 --> 02:37:38.550  
Danae Wilson: In Nez Perce country, those pole attachments can be as high as \$27 per poll per month.

983  
02:37:38.660 --> 02:37:57.220  
Danae Wilson: So when you need 57, or 157 of those poles, that reoccurring expense can be enormously expensive. You also have to budget for annual insurance, and you have to budget for annual replacement of poles, and so a percentage of those poles where you have pole attachment

984  
02:37:57.220 --> 02:38:06.080  
Danae Wilson: they're able to charge you full replacement. And so, all of those things need to be included when we think about deployment in Indian Country.

985  
02:38:06.080 --> 02:38:16.790  
Danae Wilson: And whether or not NTIA can help facilitate that with other federal agencies would be enormously helpful in deploying broadband. Thank you.

986  
02:38:24.360 --> 02:38:26.240  
Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you so much for your comments today.

987  
02:38:30.730 --> 02:38:37.440

Maci Morin: That is the end of our speaker queue, doing a last call for hands before we move on to the final topic.

988

02:38:44.330 --> 02:38:47.320

Maci Morin: Okay, seeing none, we will move on.

989

02:38:51.330 --> 02:39:04.539

Margaret Gutierrez: So, before we conclude today's consultation, we want to create a space for any additional feedback. The topics we've discussed today were intended to help guide the conversation, but we recognize that they may not capture every priority, concern, or perspective related to broadband connectivity in Tribal communities.

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02:39:04.540 --> 02:39:11.690

Margaret Gutierrez: This is an open opportunity for Tribal leaders to share input that may not have been addressed, or to expand on earlier comments in a way that feels important to your community.

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02:39:11.690 --> 02:39:24.390

Margaret Gutierrez: NTIA values this input as part of its ongoing government-to-government engagement, and appreciates the time and thought that goes into sharing these perspectives. With that, we'd like to open the floor. Does anyone have any other input they'd like to share that has not been covered yet?

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02:39:28.770 --> 02:39:32.750

Maci Morin: First hand I see is Chris. Chris, you are able to speak.

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02:39:33.150 --> 02:39:35.289

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Okay, thank you so much.

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02:39:36.400 --> 02:39:46.949

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): I won't make any promises on this one. Thank you guys very much. I think that the way you formed the questions and allowed folks to consult.

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02:39:48.270 --> 02:39:52.939

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): Really reflects your commitment to this process.

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02:39:53.270 --> 02:40:02.970

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): And, I feel that You guys asking questions, is is really refreshing, and

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02:40:03.830 --> 02:40:07.170

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): that, I felt heard, and

998

02:40:07.610 --> 02:40:12.650

Chris Cropley (under Rain Felkl): I hope that you guys are feeling the support that we have.

999  
02:40:13.400 --> 02:40:15.349  
Chris Croyley (under Rain Felkl): For the work you guys are doing.

1000  
02:40:15.960 --> 02:40:20.400  
Chris Croyley (under Rain Felkl): On serving the unserved and providing broadband.

1001  
02:40:22.960 --> 02:40:24.079  
Chris Croyley (under Rain Felkl): To the folks.

1002  
02:40:24.440 --> 02:40:28.779  
Chris Croyley (under Rain Felkl): Atâ€¦ at the Tribe, so that'sâ€¦ that's what I have to say.

1003  
02:40:31.160 --> 02:40:32.340  
Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you so much, Chris.

1004  
02:40:35.160 --> 02:40:35.990  
Margaret Gutierrez: Danae?

1005  
02:40:38.630 --> 02:40:39.430  
Danae Wilson: Thank you.

1006  
02:40:39.570 --> 02:40:42.430  
Danae Wilson: I think, in terms of,

1007  
02:40:42.570 --> 02:40:49.820  
Danae Wilson: I probably mentioned this earlier, but federal coordination of broadband efforts would be greatly appreciated.

1008  
02:40:49.850 --> 02:41:04.219  
Danae Wilson: I think having our federal partners work together to come up with solutions on how their funding and their deployments can actually make a difference in the country with input from these consultations would be phenomenal.

1009  
02:41:04.220 --> 02:41:22.059  
Danae Wilson: Is that finest guy? Probably, but it needs to be asked because what we're doing in the country is on a shoestring, and it always has been. And so, we're trying very hard to make our dollars stretch as far as possible to get coverage where we need it.

1010  
02:41:22.120 --> 02:41:36.810  
Danae Wilson: We're also trying to reserve spectrum that we received under FCC's priority window, and so when you think about the balancing act, it's very difficult when there are not federal funds to help cover those deployments.

1011  
02:41:37.200 --> 02:41:43.630

Danae Wilson: or subsidies to help pay for the deployments once they've been made, whichever way that they're made. So

1012  
02:41:43.690 --> 02:41:47.029

Danae Wilson: I appreciate that this consultation has taken place.

1013  
02:41:47.030 --> 02:42:05.589

Danae Wilson: I also, would anticipate that this consultation, these comments would be listed on the website, so if we do file comments to a FCC or to USDA, that we can then reference comments that were made here to NTI through consultation, because I think it

1014  
02:42:05.590 --> 02:42:15.310

Danae Wilson: covered the spectrum of everything that is happening in broadband in Indian Country. It would be important to be able to use this for the record in other locations as well. Thank you.

1015  
02:42:19.830 --> 02:42:23.650

Margaret Gutierrez: Thank you, Danae, and yes, they'll be on our website once we finalize.

1016  
02:42:26.900 --> 02:42:30.219

Maci Morin: Next, we'll move to Will. Will, you are unmuted.

1017  
02:42:31.450 --> 02:42:34.070

Will Micklin: Will, Micklin, Vice President Tlingit Haida.

1018  
02:42:34.760 --> 02:42:42.550

Will Micklin: So, Tlingit and Haida has established a broadband deployment as one of its top priorities.

1019  
02:42:42.950 --> 02:42:49.079

Will Micklin: For all the reasons we on this call are aware of, it touches upon really every

1020  
02:42:49.200 --> 02:42:59.089

Will Micklin: Important aspect of Tribal communities' life, from education to healthcare to economic development to governance.

1021  
02:42:59.490 --> 02:43:06.790

Will Micklin: It is of vital importance, and it is Deficient.

1022  
02:43:07.330 --> 02:43:16.830

Will Micklin: Because we have not had the investment in infrastructure in Tribal communities sufficient to support that deployment.

1023  
02:43:17.270 --> 02:43:21.469

Will Micklin: Therefore, we were, so happy.

Commented [KJ23]: Will

Commented [YE24]: Tlingit

Commented [YE25]: Tlingit and Haida

1024

02:43:21.910 --> 02:43:26.869

Will Micklin: to To, apply for and

1025

02:43:27.300 --> 02:43:32.450

Will Micklin: receive and implement a TBCP Round 1 award.

1026

02:43:33.130 --> 02:43:40.040

Will Micklin: We we recognize that That initial investment

1027

02:43:40.460 --> 02:43:43.610

Will Micklin: Should be viewed as an initial investment.

1028

02:43:44.190 --> 02:43:50.510

Will Micklin: We are concerned. We hear a lot of talk in political circles and others.

1029

02:43:50.720 --> 02:44:00.110

Will Micklin: that, the, TBCP and Reconnect and Other healthcare-related programs have

1030

02:44:00.260 --> 02:44:03.920

Will Micklin: Solve the broadband problem in any country.

1031

02:44:04.330 --> 02:44:07.180

Will Micklin: It is not. It's not a past tense.

1032

02:44:07.630 --> 02:44:15.310

Will Micklin: It is An ongoing concern, and our concerns have been discussed in this call.

1033

02:44:15.450 --> 02:44:29.859

Will Micklin: Principally Sustainability, That our, business models are sufficient to operate, maintain, and improve our systems.

1034

02:44:30.120 --> 02:44:40.899

Will Micklin: That we have equal opportunity, to avail ourselves of federal subsidies extended to legacy carriers and

1035

02:44:41.100 --> 02:44:43.780

Will Micklin: Lex and ETCs.

1036

02:44:44.100 --> 02:44:49.850

Will Micklin: That those Money's currently available to,

1037

02:44:50.360 --> 02:44:55.490

Will Micklin: ETCs under USF, and other programs

1038

02:44:56.010 --> 02:45:04.000

Will Micklin: Can be modified to make available to us without the imposition of the, the voice requirement.

1039

02:45:04.730 --> 02:45:09.519

Will Micklin: Which would be a bit a total change to our networks deployed.

1040

02:45:10.000 --> 02:45:17.530

Will Micklin: That we have support for adoption, where folks that most need it Can afford it.

1041

02:45:17.910 --> 02:45:24.020

Will Micklin: At its most basic standard of what is, broadband.

1042

02:45:24.510 --> 02:45:28.219

Will Micklin: And that we not run afoul of the increasing

1043

02:45:28.760 --> 02:45:36.490

Will Micklin: Baseline levels that, are contemplated to increase over time when

1044

02:45:36.720 --> 02:45:41.460

Will Micklin: For many of our areas, reaching that advanced standard

1045

02:45:41.730 --> 02:45:51.470

Will Micklin: Performance standard is, is not readily available without, without, investment that's unlikely to appear.

1046

02:45:52.070 --> 02:45:58.140

Will Micklin: And that we integrate those programs that have been out there, like, A lot of the healthcare

1047

02:45:58.440 --> 02:45:59.860

Will Micklin: programs.

1048

02:46:00.050 --> 02:46:06.850

Will Micklin: Provide, on-premise improvements

1049

02:46:07.290 --> 02:46:14.410

Will Micklin: But no transmission. And so, linking those two would be, would be important.

1050

02:46:14.930 --> 02:46:17.600

Will Micklin: And, now finally just getting the

1051

02:46:18.150 --> 02:46:24.410

Will Micklin: The logistics out of the way, the approvals, you know, permitting is a huge issue.

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02:46:24.870 --> 02:46:35.470

Will Micklin: you know, still, U.S. Forest Service believes the FLMPA prohibits Providing permits directly to Tribes.

1053

02:46:35.740 --> 02:46:41.389

Will Micklin: And, we'll only offer those to, to utilities.

1054

02:46:41.760 --> 02:46:48.889

Will Micklin: So drives either have to stand up a utility with the state utility commission, or,

1055

02:46:49.000 --> 02:46:57.279

Will Micklin: find some other way to cross federal lands. That That seems, Any,

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02:46:57.900 --> 02:46:59.720

Will Micklin: Just a quizzical outcome.

1057

02:47:00.340 --> 02:47:06.660

Will Micklin: So, all these are important issues. Our most important issue is serving the unserved.

1058

02:47:07.050 --> 02:47:10.870

Will Micklin: And, bringing them into the

1059

02:47:11.050 --> 02:47:17.849

Will Micklin: the level playing field with any other citizen in the United States that has that opportunity

1060

02:47:18.000 --> 02:47:24.430

Will Micklin: For broadband services that can lift up their children in education, their adults in employment.

1061

02:47:24.660 --> 02:47:33.420

Will Micklin: Extending government services and healthcare to their home to reduce costs, which is the objective of

1062

02:47:33.690 --> 02:47:37.109

Will Micklin: Of, of most every program, including healthcare.

1063

02:47:37.410 --> 02:47:44.490

Will Micklin: And, so, getting our hands around these issues where we can find improvement or seek

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02:47:44.770 --> 02:47:49.130

Will Micklin: additional support is really important, so I, I

1065

02:47:49.250 --> 02:47:57.759

Will Micklin: I value this conversation today, this consultation today, and I'm hoping it leads to extended discussion.

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02:47:58.070 --> 02:48:07.920

Will Micklin: Particularly from the written comments, which we are providing, so that, we can work these issues down to resolution

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02:48:08.230 --> 02:48:18.069

Will Micklin: And achieve the goal that we all share, which is, making sure that every Tribal citizen has an opportunity for broadband

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02:48:18.210 --> 02:48:32.490

Will Micklin: And its benefits, on the reservation, or on Tribal lands, or in Tribal communities, or in villages that others outside of those communities, have access to today. So, thank you.

1069

02:48:45.390 --> 02:48:48.060

Margaret Gutierrez: I do not see any other hands.

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02:48:52.220 --> 02:48:54.380

Margaret Gutierrez: Alright, last call for hands.

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02:48:58.750 --> 02:49:05.119

Margaret Gutierrez: Alright, so to close out today's consultation, we want to highlight a few specific next steps and opportunities for continued engagement.

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02:49:05.170 --> 02:49:23.249

Margaret Gutierrez: First, Tribal leaders are encouraged to submit written comments if you would like to expand on any of the feedback shared today, or provide additional detail. Written comments can be submitted by email to [broadbandusa@ntia.gov](mailto:broadbandusa@ntia.gov) at [ntia.gov](http://ntia.gov). When submitting comments, please include the subject line, Tribal Broadband Connectivity Grant Program, slash Native Entities Grant Program.

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02:49:23.250 --> 02:49:29.029

Margaret Gutierrez: The deadline to submit written comments is February 13, 2026, at 6 PM Eastern Standard Time.

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02:49:29.160 --> 02:49:48.639

Margaret Gutierrez: Second, NTIA encourages you to visit [broadbandusa.ntia.gov](http://broadbandusa.ntia.gov) for ongoing updates related to Tribal broadband programs, consultation materials, and future announcements. Third, please be on the lookout for upcoming NOFOs, and consider signing up for NTIA's mailing list to ensure you receive timely updates and announcements as they become available.

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02:49:48.810 --> 02:50:00.910

Margaret Gutierrez: Finally, NTIA will be hosting upcoming webinars that will provide additional information on the grant programs and forthcoming opportunities. These sessions are another way to stay informed and continue engaging with NTIA outside of today's consultation.

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02:50:01.080 --> 02:50:12.179

Margaret Gutierrez: We appreciate your participation today and encourage you to stay engaged through these next steps as NTI continues this government-to-government dialogue. Thank you so much for your time and your comments. I appreciate all of you.