



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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***Senator Melissa Ratcliff and Representative Randy Udell Address the Delay and Obstruction to Expanding Access to High-Speed Internet Statewide***

*Access to internet is essential infrastructure—rural families can't be left behind or wait any longer*

Madison, WI — Today, State Senator Melissa Ratcliff (D-Cottage Grove) and State Representative Randy Udell (D-Fitchburg) released the following statement underscoring the importance of Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program after Governor Evers released a [letter](#) to the Trump Administration urging the administration not to delay or obstruct key funding that Wisconsin expects to receive to help continue expanding access to high-speed internet statewide, including in rural areas and communities.

“Access to reliable, high-speed internet is no longer a luxury—it’s a necessity,” Senator Ratcliff stated. “The BEAD Program offers a transformative opportunity to ensure that every resident, student, and business in our district can fully participate in today’s digital economy.” Wisconsin had been allocated over \$1 billion through the BEAD Program, a federal initiative aimed at deploying broadband infrastructure to unserved and underserved areas. Administered by the Wisconsin Public Service Commission, the program focuses on delivering internet speeds of at least 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload to all households and businesses lacking such service.

In Senate District 16 and across the state, several communities still face challenges with inadequate internet connectivity, hindering opportunities in education, healthcare, and economic development. Senator Ratcliff emphasized that any reductions or continuous delays in BEAD Program funding will exacerbate these disparities.

“Our rural and suburban communities deserve equitable access to the digital tools that drive progress,” Representative Udell added. “Investing in broadband infrastructure is investing in the future of our district.” Senator Ratcliff and Representative Udell both serve as members of Governor Evers’ Task Force on Broadband Access and have been vocal advocates for broadband expansion, supporting initiatives that promote digital inclusion and economic growth. They strongly encourage constituents to engage with the BEAD Program’s planning efforts and to share their experiences with internet access to inform ongoing deployment strategies.

Here in Wisconsin, we have been working diligently to close the digital divide that has long held our workers, families, students, and communities back. We now urge the Trump Administration help our efforts to expand high-speed internet to all Wisconsinites and release the allocated federal funds.

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*Senator Melissa Ratcliff serves the people and communities of the 16th Senate District including Cambridge, Cottage Grove, Fitchburg, Fort Atkinson, Lake Mills, Marshall, Stoughton, Sun Prairie, Waterloo and areas in McFarland and on Madison’s east side.*

*Representative Randy Udell serves the people and communities of the 47<sup>th</sup> Assembly District including Fitchburg, McFarland, Stoughton, Albion, Rutland, Dunn, Dunkirk, and Pleasant Springs.*