

RCRC Rural Broadband Update

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Washington, DC...Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chairman Ajit Pai has circulated a draft version of the [2019 Broadband Deployment Report](#). The annual report provides a detailed analysis on the state of the digital divide between rural and urban America. According to the draft report, the digital divide between rural and urban Americans has narrowed substantially.

The report shows that, since the 2018 edition, the number of users lacking access to the minimum standard for high-speed internet has dropped by 25 percent. Approximately 5.6 million rural Americans obtained a high-speed broadband connection in 2018, which the report attributes to regulatory changes from the FCC that incentivize more investment in broadband deployment projects.

The figures used by the FCC rely on a 25/3 Mbps standard for minimum internet speeds. Democratic FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel argues this standard for minimum broadband should be raised, and that Chairman Pai's draft report is not an accurate depiction of the state of broadband deployment. The report will be controversial among members of Congress from rural areas where broadband deployment is a major issue. The FCC's rural coverage data is often a major target for rural broadband advocates who argue the Commission's data overestimates high-speed internet access in rural areas.

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