

# U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Bipartisan legislation to expand broadband access passes Senate Commerce Committee

Posted on Wednesday, Jul 24, 2019

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*Baldwin joins colleagues in highlighting the need to close broadband gap and expand broadband services to rural communities in Wisconsin and throughout the country*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin’s Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technological Availability (DATA) Act, led by Senators Gary Peters (D-MI) and Roger Wicker (R-MS), passed the Senate Commerce Committee.

The bipartisan legislation, which now awaits a Senate floor vote, would improve the accuracy of the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) broadband availability maps by improving the process by which broadband data is collected and ensure that federal programs supporting broadband deployment are targeted to the communities that need them the most.

“Reliable high-speed broadband is critical to strengthening small businesses and communities throughout rural Wisconsin,” said Senator Baldwin, a member of the Commerce Committee. “Our bipartisan legislation will modernize the broadband mapping process, assuring that all broadband maps are accurate and effective. Access to broadband is necessary to make sure every person in Wisconsin has the

tools to compete in today's digitally-run economy—no matter where they live.”

Specifically, the Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technological Availability (DATA) Act:

Requires the FCC to collect granular service availability data from wired, fixed wireless, and satellite broadband providers.

Requires strong parameters for service availability data collected from mobile broadband providers to ensure accuracy.

Directs the FCC to develop a process to collect verified coverage data from state, local, and tribal governments, other federal agencies, and third parties, as well as a crowdsourcing process for the public to help verify and supplement that data.

Creates a process for consumers, state, local, and Tribal governments, and other groups to challenge FCC maps with their own data, and requires the FCC to determine how to structure the process without making it overly burdensome on challengers.

The bill is endorsed by NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association, USTelecom, NCTA-The Internet Cable Association, Competitive Carriers Association, and CTIA. For the full bill text, [click here](#).

Senator Baldwin has long supported legislation that fosters the development and growth of broadband resources for businesses as well as for underserved communities in Wisconsin and across the country. In April, Senator Baldwin helped introduce the ACCESS BROADBAND Act that better directs federal resources to bring broadband access to all communities, and streamlines the process for local businesses to access federal broadband resources through a simplified application process and better oversight of federal broadband support programs. Senator Baldwin has also introduced the ACCESS Rural America Act that encourages investment in high-speed internet and expands high speed broadband access in rural communities by providing regulatory relief for telecommunications companies.

The Senate cosponsors of the Broadband DATA Act also include Senators Shelley Moore-Capito (R-WV), Cory Gardner (R-CO), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Jerry Moran (R-KS), Jacky Rosen (D-NV) and John Thune (R-SD).