

BRIAN HIGGINS
26TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRADE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SECURITY

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

REGIONAL WHIP

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3226

2459 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-3306
(202) 226-0347 (FAX)

726 EXCHANGE STREET
SUITE 601
BUFFALO, NY 14210
(716) 852-3501
(716) 852-3929 (FAX)

800 MAIN STREET
SUITE 3C
NIAGARA FALLS, NY 14301
(716) 282-1274
(716) 282-2479 (FAX)
higgins.house.gov

April 23, 2021

The Honorable Janet Yellen
Secretary
Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Secretary Yellen:

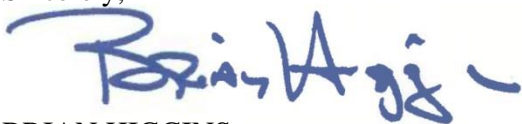
Thank you for your dedicated leadership during the first months of the Biden Administration and efforts to disburse much-needed funding COVID-19 funding passed in the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). I write to encourage flexibility as you prepare regulatory guidance on the implementation of the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, in particular regarding broadband.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the already rapid digitization of our world. Office work, education, social activities, and cultural events occur virtually more often than ever before. Municipalities are on the forefront of adapting their operations to a new reality. Counties, cities, towns, and villages across the country have expanded pre-existing programs, strengthened service areas, installed and provided new equipment, improved cybersecurity and infrastructure, established public wi-fi and hotspots, and many more innovative and necessary projects to allow their residents to maintain a positive quality of life.

As eligible uses for the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds are determined, I urge you to keep this in mind. Flexibility is essential in both allowing relief funds to be disbursed expeditiously to programs and efforts that will help constituents, and in enabling funds to be used for the most appropriate and urgent needs in each municipality. Funds should be able to supplement programs that are underway, aid new efforts, and make whole budget gaps that resulted from providing essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to broadband access in our country's diverse and varied communities. Broadband-related purposes must be kept flexible to allow for the maximum benefit.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this important matter, and for all your work to guide our nation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,



BRIAN HIGGINS
Member of Congress