

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Ranking Member Doris Matsui**

Markup of 28 Bills, Subcommittee on Communications and Technology

November 18, 2025

Thank you, Chairman Hudson.

And welcome back. Broadband is today's essential service. Families need it to help their kids learn, to keep their jobs, and to get care when they're sick. So I'm glad we're having this markup today because we have a lot of work to do to make sure the internet is accessible and affordable to everyone.

We just went through a shutdown during which we did nothing to address the affordability crisis in America. Speaker Johnson kept us out of session, not doing our jobs, for a remarkable 54 days. All because Republicans refused to even consider extending the A-C-A's enhanced premium tax credits while families are staring at skyrocketing health costs. And President Trump has failed to bring everyday prices down.

Too often, the very people high prices are hurting the most are also the ones still waiting for affordable, reliable broadband. They can't keep waiting. As we begin this markup, our job today is clearing real barriers to deployment while preserving safeguards that protect communities. We can do both. But to do so, we need to consider the broader context that will shape whether any of this work succeeds.

State broadband offices, local leaders, and providers have been planning projects for years under BEAD and Digital Equity programs. Since day 1, President Trump has thrown this process into chaos—freezing funds, forcing restarts, and stripping affordability protections—slowing deployment and keeping costs high.

We are seeing this up close in my district. California is investing big to close the digital divide—including \$38 million in last mile funding to Sacramento County alone. But we still need BEAD dollars to finish the job. That includes connecting the dead zones just 20 minutes outside Sacramento, and reaching the dozens of Delta farming communities still waiting for reliable service. If we move one step forward on permitting while taking two steps back on BEAD, we won't close the digital divide—we'll widen it.

Despite these concerns, I'm encouraged by the bipartisan items before us. Proposals that are targeted, practical, and consistent with what we've heard from states, localities, and builders. They make the permitting process more predictable and push agencies to coordinate. Everyone benefits when we make the process more transparent.

I'm especially proud of the DIGITAL Applications Act, which I co-lead. This bill creates a one-stop online portal to accept, process, and track broadband permitting applications on federal land. It promotes transparency and accountability for a process that's often fragmented, helping us deliver predictable timelines without sacrificing the public interest.

Unfortunately, there are some bills today that I won't be able to support. Proposals that would force local governments to meet tight deadlines without any extra staff or funding. And if the clock runs out, the project is automatically approved. That might sound like a way to speed things up, but in reality, it cuts out community input, leads to mistakes, and sets us up for more delays down the road. If we want faster reviews, we should give local communities more help—not take away their say.

Let's be honest. Let's call out what's really slowing deployment—the Trump Administration's constant disruptions to BEAD. Meanwhile, Republicans are cherry picking stories about slow permits to justify steamrolling local voices and rubber-stamping approvals. Families in Sacramento—and across all our districts—just want this to work. They want to get online, be able to afford their bills, and know the connection will be there when they need it. We can get there if we work together. Let's pass our bipartisan bills, stop this Administration from kneecapping federal broadband funding, and finally get shovels in the ground.

With that, I look forward to the discussion of these bills and I yield the balance of my time.