



December 14, 2022

The Honorable John Thune
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Communications,
Media, and Broadband
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science, and
Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Thune and Wicker:

Thank you for your December 8, 2022, letter requesting a timeline for the Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General's (OIG's) report on our review of the grants awarded for the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program (TBCP) pursuant to the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 (Pub. L. No. 116-260), including recommendations to address any waste, fraud, and abuse.

As I have previously relayed,¹ my office planned to initiate an audit of this program, and I am happy to report that we did so on November 22, 2022. Conducting an audit will enable us to review the program sufficiently, make any necessary findings, and then issue corrective recommendations consistent with the federal audit standards we must follow. Under these standards, a mere review of grants is not sufficient impetus to issue recommendations.

We will also produce semiannual reports reviewing the funding for broadband program grants administered by the Department, including grants from the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Pub. L. No. 117-58). Our first report is slated to be issued by January 31, 2023.

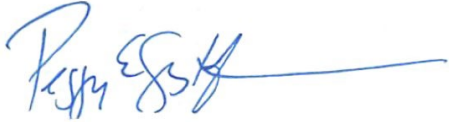
In addition to these reports, we have proactively engaged with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to share best practices for improving the prevention and detection of fraud in these programs. We also continue to provide fraud awareness training to NTIA personnel and other broadband stakeholders.

On another note, I appreciate your awareness that prior to my arrival, OIG had the unfortunate distinction of 30 years of problematic leadership. That era has come to an end. I take great pride in the progress OIG has made under my leadership, including execution of our mission, higher employee morale, successful hiring of well-qualified staff, very low turnover, the highest leadership index scores ever at OIG, and development of a more cohesive leadership team. I am heartened by our progress, and as I have told my staff, more work remains to be done. I stand ready to brief you on OIG's progress at your convenience.

¹ <https://www.oig.doc.gov/Pages/Inspector-General-Response-Letter-to-Senator-Thune.aspx>

If you have further questions, please contact me at (202) 793-3336, or David Wonnemberg, Senior Legislative and External Affairs Officer, at (202) 830-3020.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peggy E. Gustafson", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Peggy E. Gustafson
Inspector General