

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
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PUBLIC WORKS

February 2, 2016

Dear Rural Broadband Workshop Attendees,

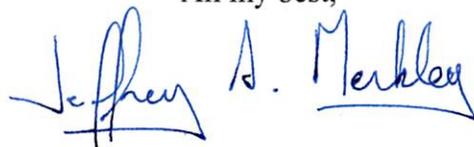
Welcome to the 2016 rural broadband workshop held here in beautiful Bend, Oregon. Thank you to the USDA Rural Development team and the Oregon Rural Development Council for hosting this important and necessary workshop as well as enhancing the economy and quality of life throughout rural Oregon.

It's impossible to participate fully in today's economy without access to broadband and other essential telecom services. The lack of quality broadband services for many rural Oregon communities is something I hear about regularly from Oregonians across the state.

Thank you to the Oregon Rural Development Council and the USDA Rural Development department for all of your programs and efforts to help connect rural Oregon. Additionally, through the FCC Connect America program, the FCC will invest \$21.6 million per year over the next five years to fund the deployment of voice- and broadband-capable networks across Oregon. Together this is a huge commitment to bringing broadband to every home in rural Oregon.

I look forward to working with you all in the future and continuing to partner to ensure that all of Oregon stays connected. The work that you are doing here at this broadband workshop is so important and I thank you for your commitment to our rural communities. Best of luck with your workshop.

All my best,



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator