

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell

Broadband Zoom Presser

June 23rd, 2023

[\[AUDIO\]](#)

Cantwell: Well, thank you, Gene, and thank you to the President and to Treasury who's on the phone for all of your leadership and helping us really try to grow the next level of innovation in the United States.

Clearly COVID and the pandemic showed us how critical broadband was to our economy and giving people options for not only working from home but having their children educated that way as well.

And we saw many communities where lack of broadband access literally put our kids at [a] disadvantage. So, we wanted to work hard to build resilient, accessible internet connectivity in our state. And these funds being announced today help some of the hardest challenges that we face in broadband to be more accessible by doing last mile solutions and creative ways to provide the connectivity to help grow our economy. The Capital Projects Fund, as you mentioned, will help us connect with 33,000 residents in our state. Both the [Washington State] Broadband Office Funding and the [Washington State] Public Works [Board] dollars will help us bring high speed internet connectivity to distressed communities. Places like Franklin County or Lincoln County, Yakima County, areas where we have had high rates of lack of connectivity will be greatly served as well as Indian country within our state. So, these additions in conjunction with the CERB (Community Economic Revitalization Board) board which [their] whole mission has been to try to help economic development happen in our state and to put infrastructure investment where economic growth could happen, but the lack of infrastructure prohibits it from happening.

These CERB funding investments will help projects around our state. Things like Skagit County with port projects or Whitman County with port projects that literally will help us grow the next level of our economy. So, we've heard from communities all across the state, how important this day-to-day connectivity is to their lives.

We know that making connectivity affordable is the key to all the other policies that we have just done. To have CHIPS & Science where innovation can happen in lots of places in our state, we know that that only can be true, if in fact we build the connectivity for the innovation of Americans to take place.

So, thanks again to the administration for their hard work and helping us get these funds out the door quickly, much more to do on the middle mile program, and hopefully we'll have something soon out of Congress that doubles down on middle mile investment. This is critically

important to provide that last mile in rural communities and even in urban communities, where there is an underserved population that just simply can't afford broadband.

So, we're going to continue to work with our colleagues here in the Senate and the House and with the White House, to make sure that we're putting more funds into broadband and finally getting the connectivity that will help America compete on an international basis. So, thanks, everybody, appreciate it.