



# SPEED RURAL BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT. REFORM POLE RULES!

## THE PROBLEM

An outdated process of attaching broadband infrastructure to poles is preventing access for millions – particularly in rural America

ACCORDING TO THE FCC,  
MORE THAN **14 MILLION**  
AMERICANS ARE STILL  
**UNCONNECTED**

## ISSUE #1: INEQUITABLE POLE REPLACEMENT COST DELAYS

Broadband infrastructure must be attached to local poles before service can reach homes and small businesses. This gives pole owners – often electric cooperatives and municipalities – significant, concentrated power to impose high and economically infeasible costs into the process used to attach broadband lines to poles.

Pole owners often require new attachers to pay for the complete replacement of poles, which can cost providers up to one-third of their total rural broadband expansion expenses. This can lead to time-consuming disputes and shift resources away from deploying broadband. Disputes and delays related to the pole process can sometimes even derail projects entirely.

**THE SOLUTION:** Federal policymakers can guarantee a more equitable division of costs between pole owners and attachers for replacing utility pole infrastructure.

## ISSUE #2: UNREASONABLE PERMIT PROCESSING DELAYS

Pole owners also often unnecessarily delay the issuance of permits for providers to attach broadband lines to poles. There are currently no rules setting timeframes for permit approvals for poles owned by many electric cooperatives and municipalities, which means they have no incentive to promptly act on attachment requests.

These lengthy delays caused by pole owners deny communities the critical internet services they need. In fact, a study showed that every month of delayed expansion due to pole attachment delays costs Americans nationally between \$491 million and \$1.86 billion in lost economic gains. That accounts to more than \$22 billion in lost economic gains each year.

**THE SOLUTION:** Federal policymakers can ensure broadband providers have timely access to poles by standardizing timelines and expediting dispute resolution.

**CONNECT  
THE FUTURE**



**LEARN MORE:**  
[CONNECTTHEFUTURE.COM](https://connectthefuture.com)