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# Alabama Lawmaker Calls for Federal Emergency Broadband Funds

*Describing rural Americans as "feeling abandoned and desperately in need of help," Rep. Robert Aderholt has asked the Trump administration to address connectivity that enables remote education and health services.*

BY NEWS STAFF / MARCH 19, 2020

SHUTTERSTOCK

Yesterday, Rep. Robert Aderholt, R-Ala., wrote a letter to President Trump imploring him to "prioritize the expeditious delivery of broadband to rural areas."

As reported by *Yellowhammer News*, Aderholt complimented the Trump administration on its response to the COVID-19 pandemic thus far, but urged the president to move on the rural broadband issue.

"I applaud your strong leadership through this national emergency as your administration works to change the trajectory of COVID-19 and slow its spread, and simply ask that you not forget rural Americans who are forced to face the consequences of the digital divide as new containment measures are implemented," Aderholt wrote in the letter.

Earlier this week on an episode of the radio program *The Jeff Poor Show*, Aderholt suggested that despite the fact that emergency initiatives will significantly increase U.S. debt, money cannot be an issue when it comes to the government's efforts to help fight the effects of the novel coronavirus, as reported by conservative news outlet *Breitbart*.

"This is sort of like in a time of war," Aderholt said on the radio program. "You don't worry about pinching pennies if you think you might lose the war."

Aderholt also said on the radio that bipartisanship is one of the positive things that has come out of the coronavirus outbreak.

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However, despite the need for Americans to work together, business and political interests could still delay rural broadband expansion in some situations. *Yellowhammer News* reports today that 14 applications for Alabama's state broadband grant program, administered by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA), have been formally disputed.

Earlier this year, Alabama released a new map indicating the areas of the state that lack broadband availability, as well as areas that don't meet the definition of "unserved" and

places with active broadband projects. The map was created by ADECA and has given stakeholders a new way of seeing the broadband problem in the state.

“I’m just saying that if you look at the map you really get an understanding of how we’re losing our people and we’re losing it to other areas of our state,” said Alabama state Rep. Debbie Wood, according to *Alabama Daily News*. “If you look to the north, it’s almost covered with internet access. We need to make sure that the money is being spread to 67 counties. It cannot just go to one area.”

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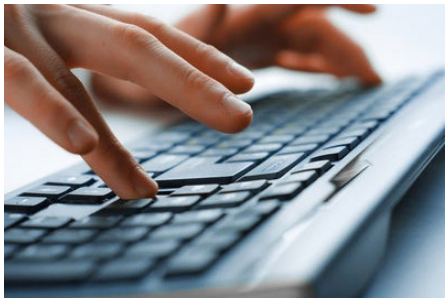

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