



Press Release

Broadband Deployment: The Problem with Poles

PAULINA ENCK | APRIL 22, 2024

Congress allocated billions of dollars to subsidize broadband deployment through the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program, but costs associated with access to necessary infrastructure could jeopardize the program's success. In a new insight, Director of Technology and Innovation Policy Jeffrey Westling discusses the importance of utility poles access to successfully deploy broadband and considers the need for federal regulators to work to minimize extraneous costs and delays.

Key points:

- The Biden Administration is currently in the process of overseeing a historic \$42.5 billion infrastructure investment through BEAD to connect unserved households to the Internet.
- Broadband providers need access to utility poles to attach wires and equipment, but lengthy negotiations between private pole owners and broadband providers, as well as municipalities and cooperatives charging excessive fees to access poles, add risk to deployment decisions.
- Congress and the Biden Administration should consider changes to BEAD and broadband deployment policies more generally that would streamline broadband deployment, ensuring that the costs associated with buildouts aren't exacerbated by unnecessary fees and delays.

[Read the analysis](#)