

Via Email: [PRA@fcc.gov](mailto:PRA@fcc.gov) & [nicole.ongele@fcc.gov](mailto:nicole.ongele@fcc.gov)  
Nicole Ongele, FCC

Re: Federal Communications Commission; Notice and Request for Comments (OMB 3060–1279; FR ID 315732)

Roedel Parsons Blache Fontana Piontek & Pisano, A L.C. serves as outside general counsel for Volt Broadband, LLC (“Volt”). Volt was authorized as an RDOF carrier in 2022 for two census block groups in study area #279058, totaling 652 RDOF locations. Volt seeks clarification on the criteria used in evaluating fabric challenges and permissible types of supporting documentation as more particularly outlined below. Volt suggests such clarification will: (1) enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected by the Wireline Competition Bureau (“Bureau”); (2) minimize the burden of the collection on RDOF awardees; and (3) promote the proper performance of the functions of the Federal Communications Commission (“Commission”).

The Broadband DATA Act (“Act”) was passed in March of 2020 and required the Commission to establish the Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric (“Fabric”) as well as to create a process by which consumers, State, local, and Tribal government entities, and other entities and individuals may challenge information contained in the Fabric.<sup>1</sup> A Broadband Serviceable Location (“BSL”) is a business or residential location in the United States at which fixed broadband internet access service is, or can be, installed.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, the Fabric is the “common dataset of all locations in the United States where fixed broadband internet access service can be installed,” as determined and updated by the Commission, at minimum, every six (6) months.<sup>3</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Communications Commission Order DA-25-32A1, adopted by Wireline Competition Bureau on January 10, 2025, at para. 5; 47 U.S.C. § 642 (b)(1)(B); 47 U.S.C. § 642(b)(5)(A).

<sup>2</sup> Order DA-25-32A1 at fn. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Order DA-25-32A1 at para. 5 citing 47 U.S.C. § 642(b)(1)(A)(i-iv).

Act further directs that the Fabric shall “serve as the foundation upon which all data relating to the availability of fixed broadband internet service . . . [is to] be reported and overlaid.”<sup>4</sup>

In July 2020 and January 2021, the Commission adopted rules establishing certain elements of the Fabric.<sup>5</sup> Thereafter, in June 2022, the first version of the Fabric was released, which has been subsequently updated every six months.<sup>6</sup> Within the Fabric, each BSL is assigned a unique identifier (Location ID), which reflects a single point defined by a set of geographic coordinates that fall within the footprint of a structure, as well as other attributes of the structure.<sup>7</sup> On January 10, 2025, the Bureau adopted the Fabric as the basis for verifying compliance with high-cost program deployment obligations and for adjusting the location obligations for certain high-cost support mechanisms.<sup>8</sup>

The Bureau has indicated that the Fabric is the most accurate picture of broadband serviceable locations available, however, the fabric challenge process is a critical part of ensuring such accuracy.<sup>9</sup> Such challenges focus on which locations are BSLs and are resolved by the Commission’s contractor, CostQuest, with guidance from Commission staff.<sup>10</sup> Upon submission of a challenge, the provider receives notification of the challenge outcome through the BDC system and/or email in the form of a challenge response code.<sup>11</sup> An explanation of the challenge response

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<sup>4</sup> Order DA-25-32A1 at para. 5 citing 47 U.S.C. § 642(b)(1)(B)(ii).

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* at para. 6 referencing *Establishing the Digital Opportunity Data Collection; Modernizing the FCC Form 477 Data Program*, WC Docket No. 19-195 et al., Second Report and Order and Third Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 35 FCC Rcd 7460, 7483-84, paras. 52-54 (2020) (Second BDC Report and Order); *Establishing the Digital Opportunity Data Collection; Modernizing the FCC Form 477 Data Program*, WC Docket No. 19-195 et al., Third Report and Order, 36 FCC Rcd 1126, 1175-77, paras. 126-32 (2021) (Third BDC Report and Order).

<sup>6</sup> Order DA-25-32A1 at para. 6 referencing *Broadband Data Task Force Announces Opening of Sixth Broadband Data Collection Filing Window and Release of Updated Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric*, WC Docket No. 11-10 et al., Public Notice, DA 24-1257 (BDTF Dec. 16, 2024) (Sixth BDC Filing Window Public Notice) (announcing the release of Version 6 of the Fabric to existing Fabric licensees).

<sup>7</sup> Order DA-25-32A1 at para. 6.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* at para. 1.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* at para. 10-11.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* at para. 13.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.* at para. 13.

codes can be found on the Broadband Data Collection Help Center section of the Federal Communication Commission's website.<sup>12</sup>

The Bureau has recently indicated that it will announce revised location totals for RDOF carriers in 2027, based on the December 2026 version of the Fabric.<sup>13</sup> The specific BSL's within the revised totals will be the locations that RDOF awardees are required to serve as part of their deployment obligations.<sup>14</sup> Compliance will be monitored on a location list basis.<sup>15</sup> If the revised totals require the RDOF awardee to deploy to additional locations, an adjustment to support will be made on a pro rata basis for each location over the 35% threshold based on the average support amount per location.<sup>16</sup> However, RDOF awardees will have six (6) months to submit requests to remove locations from their revised location count based on the location being unreasonable to serve.<sup>17</sup> The Bureau will set up a data collection system for submissions of such requests as well as the rationale and supporting evidence therefor.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, the Bureau may request additional information and failure to comply with such request will result in a denial of the challenge.<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, the Bureau has declined to adopt specific criteria or presumptions for determining whether a location is unreasonable to serve in favor of a case by case approach.<sup>20</sup> The Bureau has identified the following factors as relevant to the determination: (1) whether the property owner refuses to allow a provider to obtain access to land that is needed to construct the

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<sup>12</sup> Fabric Challenge Response Codes, <https://help.bdc.fcc.gov/hc/en-us/articles/17077103993371-Fabric-Challenge-Response-Codes>.

<sup>13</sup> Order DA-25-32A1 at para. 25.

<sup>14</sup> *Id.* at para. 26.

<sup>15</sup> *Id.* at para. 26.

<sup>16</sup> *Id.* at para. 29

<sup>17</sup> *Id.* at para. 37.

<sup>18</sup> *Id.* at para. 37.

<sup>19</sup> *Id.* at para. 37.

<sup>20</sup> *Id.* at paras. 34-36.

network; (2) how far away the location is from the existing network footprint; (3) terrain issues; (4) the marginal cost to deploy to the location as compared to revenues; (5) whether a location has been deemed extremely high-cost by the state for the BEAD program and (6) whether a carrier conducted the required due diligence prior to bidding to ensure it was bidding for enough support to meet its RDOF obligations.<sup>21</sup>

Volt suggests the aforementioned factors do not provide sufficient guidance to RDOF awardees, particularly in light of the present difficulties associated with fabric challenges. As outlined above, the Broadband DATA Act designates the Fabric as the foundation for all data relating to the availability of fixed broadband internet service to be reported and overlaid.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, the Fabric will presumably serve as the foundation for the Bureau's data collection. The Bureau has also acknowledged that the continued accuracy of the Fabric depends, in no small part, upon fabric challenges.<sup>23</sup> Volt suggests that uncertainty regarding challenge criteria and recent amendments to the fabric challenge questionnaire could compromise the accuracy of the Fabric, complicating, if not prejudicing, future location challenges.

Historically, Volt has provided the electrical meter, current electrical usage data, and a satellite view snapshot from a Landis & Gyr System as supporting documentation for its location challenges. For instance, Volt recently submitted a fabric challenge with the basis for the challenge being that a BSL was missing from the Fabric. A copy of the challenge information and supporting documentation is attached hereto as Exhibit A. Volt was notified via email that its challenge was

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<sup>21</sup> *Id.* at para. 34

<sup>22</sup> *Id.* at para. 5 citing 47 U.S.C. § 642(b)(1)(B)(ii).

<sup>23</sup> *Id.* at paras. 10-11.

denied; a copy of the email is attached as Exhibit B. The email indicates that the reason for denial was: “The challenge did not pass the manual review process required for this location.”

As noted above, explanations of challenge response codes can be found on the Broadband Data Collection Help Center section of the Commission’s website.<sup>24</sup> This page contains the following explanation:

**1.12 The challenge did not pass the manual review process required for this location.**

Your challenge was manually reviewed using street or aerial imagery, and the manual review did not support adding this new BSL to the Fabric. A common reason for this outcome is that the most current imagery used for review does not show a structure or signs of construction at or near the location of your challenge.

As shown in Exhibit A, Volt’s challenge concerned a location with a highly visible structure. Despite such, a manual review of unidentified “street or aerial imagery” apparently did not support adding the location to the Fabric. As the location clearly includes a structure, the challenge response code offers no substantive explanation as to why the challenge was denied.

Denials without substantive explanations offer providers no guidance for future challenges. Such is particularly concerning considering the revised location challenge questionnaire does not allow for the submission of any supporting documentation. A snapshot of the current questionnaire is attached hereto as Exhibit C. This deficiency introduces the possibility of denials based on a lack of supporting evidence. Therefore, Volt respectfully suggests that the lack of clarification on the Commission's challenge criteria coupled with insufficient denial explanations, may result in the improper exclusion of BSLs from the Fabric. Such exclusion undermines the accuracy of the

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<sup>24</sup> Fabric Challenge Response Codes, <https://help.bdc.fcc.gov/hc/en-us/articles/17077103993371-Fabric-Challenge-Response-Codes>.

Fabric, mandates of the Broadband DATA Act,<sup>25</sup> and the Commission's goal of maximizing RDOF support.<sup>26</sup> Contrastively, if the Commission provides additional guidance and clarification, such will eliminate provider speculation and confusion, thereby increasing the quality, utility, and clarity of the information submitted.

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<sup>25</sup> See generally 47 U.S.C. § 642.

<sup>26</sup> Order DA-25-32A1 at para. 34.

# Exhibit A

## Location Challenge – 04-29-2025-11 (Challenge ID: 30548762)

**Object ID:** 67268

**Category:** Missing Broadband Serviceable Location

**System Address** OFF HIGHWAY 4

**Active Electric Residential Meter –** XR08320

**Latitude:** 32.04985

**Longitude:** -91.47904

The screenshot shows the Emerge 2.2 web interface. The main map area displays an aerial view of a rural area with a red box highlighting a specific location. A pop-up window titled "1 ENDPOINT" provides the following details:

- Address: OFF HIGHWAY 4, DELHI LA 71232
- Model: RF Enhanced Integrated FOCUS AX
- Meter #: XR08320, s/n 4032401309(0000F0598F9D)
- Firmware: v 251284-13.66
- DCW Version: 2001.13.63
- Tickle Success: 50
- HAN Version: 061411-02.03.08

The interface also includes a sidebar with navigation options (Setup, Network, Operations, Reporting, Help) and a top navigation bar with search and filter options.

The screenshot shows the "Gridstream RF Endpoint Information" page for Meter #XR08320. The page displays the following information:

- Status: Normal [View History]
- Model: RF Enhanced Integrated FOCUS AX
- Configuration Group: Residential Configuration Group SC
- Latitude: 32.04985 Longitude: 91.47904
- WAN Address: FE.F0.59.8F.9D.80
- OFF HIGHWAY 4, DELHI, LA 71232
- Current Neighbor: S/N 4032401289(F0598F89) (Normal)
- Last Reading: 123.9732 - 4/29/2025 12:00:00 AM
- Collector: Como RF - Layer: 2

The page includes tabs for GENERAL, MANAGE, READINGS, INTERVAL DATA, HISTORY, and HAN. The "READINGS" tab is active, showing a bar chart titled "Last 7 Days Usage" with the following data:

Day	Usage (kWh)
Tue Apr 22	0.75
Wed Apr 23	0.75
Thu Apr 24	0.75
Fri Apr 25	0.75
Sat Apr 26	0.75
Sun Apr 27	0.75
Mon Apr 28	0.75
Tue Apr 29	0.75

# Exhibit B

Thank you again for submitting a Location Challenge to the FCC's Broadband Map. The FCC reviewed your challenge and, for the reason stated below, could not approve your challenge.

Challenge ID: 30548762

Challenge Category: A location is missing from the Fabric.

Date Challenge Received: 2025-04-29

Location ID: null

Location Data Vintage: 5

Reason for Denial: The challenge did not pass the manual review process required for this location.

You can view the status of your challenge by logging on the FCC's Broadband Map at <https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/>. For more information on how to do that, see <https://help.bdc.fcc.gov/hc/en-us/articles/18344708883483-How-to-View-and-Manage-Location-Availability-and-Mobile-Challenges>. If you have further questions about this outcome or the FCC's Location Challenge process, please visit the BDC Help Center at <https://help.bdc.fcc.gov/>.

# Exhibit C

## Add New Location Challenge ✕

✓ 1 Contact   2 Challenge Type   3 Certification

Category  
A location is missing from the Fabric. ▼

**Make sure the pin is in the right place!** Grab the pin on the map below and move it if necessary. It should be on a structure, either one that is visible on the map or is too new to show up. Make sure the pin is not on a building that already has a gray dot on it or on a road. Try using satellite view and zooming as much as possible.

Latitude	Longitude
32.299756	-91.581700

Existing Location

**Location**

This location lacks an address

Address

City  State Select... ▼

Zip  Zip+4 (optional)

Unit Count

**Tell us more about this building**

It is intended to be mobile (e.g., it is an RV or a boat).

Previous Next