October 30, 2026

Ernest Teves, Director
Broadband Development Office
Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts
Via Electronic Mail

Subject: BDO Strategic Plan Outline Comments

Dear Director Teves:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the *Strategic Plan Blueprint* ("Blueprint") published for comment by the Texas Broadband Development Office (the "Office" or "BDO"). The Texas Broadband Association ("TBBA") is the state public policy voice for members of the broadband industry in Texas. Representing small and large internet service providers, TBBA advocates for a legislative and regulatory climate that encourages investment in high-quality, high-speed broadband in Texas.

As a threshold matter, TBBA sincerely appreciates the efforts by Comptroller Huffines and the BDO to develop the Blueprint and initiate immediate improvements in transparency and stakeholder engagement. As you know, TBBA has submitted previous written recommendations regarding process improvements to the Office[1] and the incorporation of many of those process improvements in the Blueprint is acknowledged with appreciation. In the interest of efficiency, TBBA's comments do not restate the process improvements previously recommended and outlined in the Blueprint. Instead, our comments focus on specific areas warranting further attention and additional feedback not previously provided to the Office. Throughout these comments, TBBA encourages the BDO to apply program requirements, deadlines, and compliance obligations consistently across awardees and according to the technology deployed, in keeping with the transparency and accountability principles reflected in the Blueprint.

[1] See attached "TBBA Response to BDO Feedback Solicitation of July 10" and "TBBA Feedback to BDO from 8 26 Meeting"

1. **Transparency, Data, Mapping, and Challenge Operations (Blueprint Section 2)**

Challenge and Protest Process: TBBA supports the improvements and fortifications to the challenge process identified in the Blueprint. A robust challenge process which allows the submission of up-to-date service information is critical to ensuring that tax dollars are not expended toward already served locations. TBBA encourages the BDO to include, as part of the final Strategic Plan, additional information regarding the challenge process including evidentiary standards and information that will be available to challengers as part of the standing challenge process.

Public Accountability Dashboards: TBBA supports enhanced public reporting regarding grant and project completion status, and appreciates this initiative. Such public reporting and dashboards will enhance public trust in the projects awarded by BDO and provide stakeholders with better information regarding project progress and implementation.

Competitive Selection: TBBA supports the requirement that all projects be competitively bid moving forward.

2. **Stakeholder and Regional Engagement (Blueprint Section 3)**

Stakeholder Inputs and Regular Convenings: TBBA supports the stakeholder engagement improvements outlined in the Blueprint and continues to support opportunities for in-person and hybrid online/in-person engagement.

3. **Non-Deployed BEAD Funds (Blueprint Section 4.5)**

While TBBA recognizes that federal guidance regarding usage of non-deployed BEAD funds is not immediately forthcoming, TBBA encourages the Office to consider that such funds may be available in the future when weighing future uses of the Broadband Infrastructure Fund ("BIF"). Specifically, TBBA encourages the Office to take a deliberate and strategic approach to the future allocation of BIF funds to ensure that state resources supplement, rather than supplant, funding otherwise available through federal sources, including non-deployed BEAD funds.

4. **Governance, Compliance, and Fiscal Accountability (Blueprint Section 6)**

Pre-NOFA Conferences: TBBA supports the inclusion of pre-NOFA conferences in the Blueprint, and reiterates that the opportunity for meaningful dialogue, discussion, and questions regarding potential new funding programs prior to the issuance of a NOFA is important for stakeholders and the efficacy of the programs themselves. We continue to suggest the BDO look to other state agencies who are routinely formulating grant programs with stakeholder feedback.

Publication of Subgrantee / Grantee Agreements as part of Pre-NOFA Conference: While the Blueprint does not address grant agreement terms or negotiation thereof, TBBA encourages the BDO to publish draft grant agreement terms for stakeholder review and comment alongside program development and pre-NOFA stakeholder conferences, consistent with the engagement framework contemplated in the Blueprint. Contract terms developed without sufficient stakeholder input can create unintended challenges for project deployment, particularly when terms are not disclosed until the point of execution. Providing this opportunity early in the process would help ensure that agreements reflect practical deployment realities, allow applicants to account for contractual obligations in their proposals, and minimize post-award negotiations that could delay deployment. Importantly, this approach would also protect the integrity of the award process by promoting transparency and consistency, avoiding any perception of preferential treatment or changes to program requirements after awards have been made.

Subgrantee Meetings: TBBA supports the Blueprint's recommendation to convene regular subgrantee meetings to identify obstacles to project completion. TBBA further encourages the BDO to build upon these efforts by taking an active role, where appropriate and within its authority, in facilitating solutions to identified challenges.

Permitting and environmental throughput: TBBA appreciates the Office's acknowledgement that permitting delay is the most frequently cited cause of missing federal deadlines. However, we urge BDO to consider that permitting delays encompass far more than National Environmental Policy Act clearance and can occur at every level of government including local, state, and federal permitting authorities. In addition, right-of-way approvals, facility attachments, and utility coordination present similar challenges and pose risks to timely project completion. The BDO's development of tools that may increase deployment coordination and promote accountability for providers could aid in the resolution of such challenges, as would BDO acting as a facilitator for the resolution of such challenges between providers, utilities, and permitting authorities, where appropriate.

5. **Key Performance Indicators (Blueprint Section 7)**

TBBA supports and encourages the publication of dashboards as identified in the Blueprint. Such dashboards will enhance accountability and better inform the public of the status of builds in their area. We also urge the BDO to, as a part of such dashboards, transparently document any authorized differences in requirements across awardees and technologies. TBBA further encourages the BDO to structure these dashboards around

deployment outcomes — locations served and milestones met — applied consistently and according to each authorized technology.

6. **Broadband Infrastructure Fund**

While the Blueprint does not discuss the development of a plan for the utilization of the remainder of BIF, TBBA continues to encourage the BDO to initiate a public process to develop such a plan. As discussed above, BIF funds should be strategically allocated to complement, rather than duplicate, initiatives eligible for federal funding. Further, BIF funds should be carefully allocated to avoid duplicating private investment and employed strategically to maximize taxpayer benefit. BIF funds could also be utilized to speed time to deployment and overcome barriers to deployment, and TBBA supports such uses of the fund.

Generally, TBBA expresses its support for the transparency, accountability, accessibility, and engagement measures identified in the Blueprint and looks forward to continuing to work with the Office as it develops its full Strategic Plan. TBBA welcomes the opportunity to provide further input or clarification as the Office reviews these comments.

Sincerely,

Tina O'Jibway
President, Texas Broadband Association