

**Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of)	
)	
Connect America Fund)	WC Docket No. 10-90
)	
ETC Annual Reports and Certifications)	WC Docket No. 14-58

ORDER

Adopted: June 26, 2020

Released: June 26, 2020

By the Chief, Telecommunications Access Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau:

1. In this Order, the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau), on its own motion, grants a brief, limited waiver of the July 1, 2020 annual certification requirement under section 54.313(j)(1) of the Commission's rules for certain price cap and competitive eligible telecommunications carriers (ETCs) who receive legacy high-cost support.¹ The Bureau will allow these carriers to file FCC Form 481 once the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) amends the filing portal for these carriers.² All other ETCs, however, must complete FCC Form 481 by July 1, 2020.³

2. In 2019, the Commission adopted a schedule to phase-out legacy high-cost support received by certain price cap carriers and fixed competitive ETCs, during which recipients still must certify annually to USAC that support was used for its intended purpose, but are not subject to any other annual reporting requirements in section 54.313 of the Commission's rules.⁴

3. It has come to the Bureau's attention, however, that USAC's FCC Form 481 system does not fully incorporate the rule as adopted in the *2019 Phase-Down Order*. Accordingly, we grant a temporary waiver of the filing deadline only for affected carriers. Once USAC announces it has amended its FCC Form 481 system and it can collect only the required certification for affected carriers, the Bureau will announce a new deadline. We find it is not in the public interest to require these carriers to complete this certification until USAC has amended the filing portal to eliminate extraneous and unnecessary reporting requirements for these carriers, but the public interest and administration of the Fund will be

¹ 47 CFR § 54.313(j). *See* 47 CFR § 1.3 (Commission may waive its rules on its own motion).

² Section 54.313(j) of the Commission's rules require that ETCs file the annual reporting information by July 1 each year. 47 CFR § 54.313(j). The Bureau has received renewed approval from the Office of Management and Budget, pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act, to require carriers to complete FCC Form 481. *See* Office of Management and Budget Action for Control No. 3060-0986 (June 15, 2020), https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAViewICR?ref_nbr=202004-3060-037.

³ The Bureau recently granted a partial waiver of the same deadline for certain rate-of-return carriers. *See Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90, Order, DA 20-601 (WCB rel. Jun. 8, 2020).

⁴ 47 CFR § 54.313(m); *see also Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90, Report and Order, 34 FCC Rcd 807, 816-17, para. 25 (2019) (*2019 Phase-Down Order*); *Connect America Fund, et al.*, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 26 FCC Rcd 17663, 17733, para. 180 (2011) (*USF/ICC Transformation Order*), *aff'd sub nom. In re FCC 11-161*, 753 F.3d 1015 (10th Cir. 2014) (transitioning frozen support upon completion of the Connect America Phase II auction).

served by maintaining the integrity of USAC's uniform collection of FCC Form 481's information and certifications.

4. Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED that, pursuant to the authority contained in sections 0.91, 0.291, and 1.3 of the Commission's rules, 47 CFR §§ 0.91, 0.291, 1.3, the annual reporting deadline of July 1, 2020, codified at 47 CFR § 54.313(j)(1) for carriers to whom 47 CFR § 54.313(m) applies, IS WAIVED to the extent described herein.

5. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, pursuant to the authority contained in sections 0.91, 0.291, and 1.102 of the Commission's rules, 47 CFR §§ 0.91, 0.291, 1.102, this Order SHALL BE EFFECTIVE upon release.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Ryan Palmer
Chief
Telecommunications Access Policy Division
Wireline Competition Bureau