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March 21, 2010

The Honorable Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

We write to share concerns over the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) rulemaking on the roaming obligations of commercial wireless providers. The Commission's action in August 2007 clarifying the roaming obligations of providers for voice services, was a step forward for consumers. However, the Commission's work remains incomplete, and it should advance on data roaming in a timely manner.

We appreciate the Commission's discussion in the National Broadband Plan about the need to move forward on the open proceeding on data roaming agreements. While we understand the plan also calls for proceedings on many other important and complex issues impacting our country's telecommunications policy, we urge the FCC to act quickly with regards to the roaming proceeding.

Every American owning a wireless device expects seamless connectivity. We believe the Commission has ample authority under the Communications Act to require automatic roaming for wireless data services and help satisfy consumer expectations. As you know, widespread access to wireless service is increasingly essential to our economy, public safety, and national security. Commission action on data roaming will help ensure Americans have the ability to communicate regardless of where they live or travel.

These issues are particularly acute for rural and remote communities across the country, not just those in Alaska and Mississippi. People in rural and remote areas have far fewer choices and usually pay more than their urban counterparts. The availability of roaming services in these areas at reasonable rates is exceptionally important.

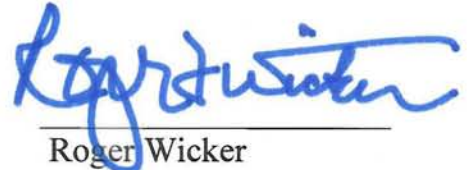
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Data roaming is a fundamental building block for wireless broadband deployment and access to wireless data and voice services. Americans in rural communities deserve the same kind and quality of advanced telecommunications services as those residents of urban areas enjoy. We urge the Commission to act promptly to require licensees to negotiate automatic data roaming agreements where technologically feasible.

Sincerely,



Mark Begich
United States Senator



Roger Wicker
United States Senator

cc: Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Commissioner Robert M. McDowell
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Meredith Attwell Baker