



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

April 22, 2014

The Honorable Fred Upton  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Upton:

Thank you for your letter recommending the Commission refer evaluation of proposals to expand the Schools and Libraries universal service support mechanism – also known as the E-rate program – to the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service (Joint Board). Modernization of the E-rate program is among the most important tasks currently facing the Commission. It is critical to America's future to ensure that our schools and libraries have affordable access to modern high-capacity broadband technologies.

With respect to your specific recommendation, the Commission sought comment in the *E-rate Modernization Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* (NPRM) on seeking the advice and guidance of the Joint Board on any temporary, long-term or permanent approach to providing additional funding for the E-rate program, including the necessity and the amount of any increase. Commission staff is reviewing the record that has been developed in response to the *NPRM*, and meeting with stakeholders to ensure that we have robust input from all interested parties, including state public utilities commissions. Should it be clear that aspects of the E-rate modernization process, or other issues before the Commission, can be improved through a referral to the Joint Board, I will carefully consider taking such action.

With respect to E-rate, as I recently stated, I have often found the biggest immediate opportunities are unlocked by first looking carefully at how to do better with what you already have. Should it be necessary to increase the permanent funding levels for the E-Rate program, we will do what is appropriate. Prudently, however, any program funding change must include an assessment of the use of current funds along with a fact-based analysis of the needs of the program to meet the goals to which we all ascribe. The Office of Managing Director of the FCC, led by Jon Wilkins, is currently working on this assessment.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. We will include your letter in the record of the proceeding for Commission consideration as we proceed with modernization reform of this important program. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", written over a horizontal line.

Tom Wheeler



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April 22, 2014

The Honorable Greg Walden  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Walden:

Thank you for your letter recommending the Commission refer evaluation of proposals to expand the Schools and Libraries universal service support mechanism – also known as the E-rate program – to the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service (Joint Board). Modernization of the E-rate program is among the most important tasks currently facing the Commission. It is critical to America's future to ensure that our schools and libraries have affordable access to modern high-capacity broadband technologies.

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April 22, 2014

The Honorable Roger Wicker  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, and the Internet  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
United States Senate  
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Wicker:

Thank you for your letter recommending the Commission refer evaluation of proposals to expand the Schools and Libraries universal service support mechanism – also known as the E-rate program – to the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service (Joint Board). Modernization of the E-rate program is among the most important tasks currently facing the Commission. It is critical to America's future to ensure that our schools and libraries have affordable access to modern high-capacity broadband technologies.

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Tom Wheeler



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OFFICE OF  
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April 22, 2014

The Honorable John Thune  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
United States Senate  
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Thune:

Thank you for your letter recommending the Commission refer evaluation of proposals to expand the Schools and Libraries universal service support mechanism – also known as the E-rate program – to the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service (Joint Board). Modernization of the E-rate program is among the most important tasks currently facing the Commission. It is critical to America's future to ensure that our schools and libraries have affordable access to modern high-capacity broadband technologies.

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Tom Wheeler