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FCC Mail Room

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The Honorable Tom Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

Broadband Internet access has become an essential part of the economic and social fabric in many rural communities. With robust broadband service, even a small town can rely on its residents' talent and determination to compete with the world. Without it, the same community risks being left behind in today's technology-centric economy.

Phase II of the Connect America Fund ("CAF II") offers a tremendous opportunity to bring advanced, fiber-fed broadband connections to millions of Americans in rural areas. Thanks to the Commission's well-publicized efforts, thousands of rural communities are now counting on CAF II. Indeed, the June 10 Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking ("NPRM") has raised hopes further by more than doubling the promised download speeds in the 2011 USF/ICC Transformation Order from 4 Mbps to 10 Mbps.

I am writing today to emphasize how important it is to ensure that the final details of CAF II live up to their promise. I appreciate the fact that the June 10 FNPRM identifies a number of constructive ideas that could help achieve the speedier network goals without exceeding the CAF II annual budget, including extending the term of support up to ten years and providing flexibility on the build-out parameters. I hope these ideas will be seriously considered.

I also encourage the FCC to be as precise as possible when targeting support to areas where broadband would not otherwise be available. It is my hope that the FCC will collect targeted, accurate data on existing service areas to ensure that all unserved customers have access to broadband. It is also important that this effort protects the interests of existing providers from overbuilding.

Thank you for taking the time to consider these issues and for your work provide rural broadband to Americans.

Sincerely,



Richard Burr

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