

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 17, 2014

1038

The Honorable Tom Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20536

Received & Inspected

SEP 25 2014

FCC Mail Room

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

Access to broadband Internet is essential to the economic and social fabric of every community across America, but it is even more critical for rural communities as they seek to build businesses, order supplies, enhance educational opportunities and connect to friends and relatives. Without robust broadband service, rural communities will be left behind in today's technology-centric economy.

Phase II of the Connect America Fund ("CAF II") offers an opportunity to bring speedier, fiber-fed broadband connections to millions of Americans in rural areas served by the larger "price cap" carriers. The FCC's June 10 Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM) more than doubles the promised download speeds in the 2011 USF/ICC Transformation Order, from 4 Mbps to 10 Mbps. And because CAF II represents the final phase of Universal Service reform, its rule will effectively determine, for years to come, how broadband support is distributed in rural communities where the access means so much.

We are writing today to emphasize how important it is to ensure that the final details of CAF II live up to its promise. We are concerned that if the Commission more than doubles the speed requirements without allowing the appropriate level of flexibility in other elements of CAF II, the program's overall mission could be endangered.

To the Commission's credit, 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. Importantly, the CAF II funding period must be extended from the current 5 years to 10 years to allow adequate time and flexibility for the construction of the higher-capacity network. We hope you will take these ideas to heart.

Thank you for considering our concerns, and we look forward to working with you.

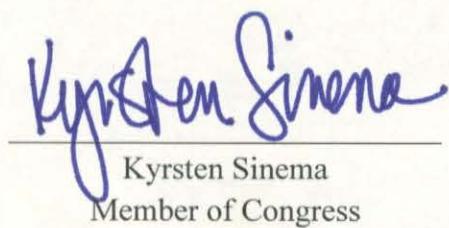
Sincerely,



Matt Salmon
Member of Congress



Trent Franks
Member of Congress



Kyrsten Sinema
Member of Congress