

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 18, 2014

1039

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:

The proliferation of the broadband access has stimulated economic growth, expanded access to information, and acted as a conduit between rural, suburban, and urban communities. Despite the essential nature of broadband access in our modern economy, millions of Americans, including thousands of Kansans, are still without broadband access. As the FCC proceeds through implementation of Phase II of the Connect America Fund (CAF II), we urge the Commission to work with industry and communities eager to provide Internet service in a practical manner.

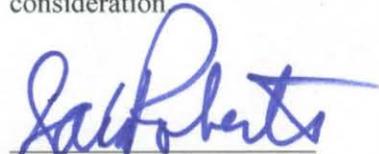
CAF II offers a tremendous opportunity to bring broadband access to millions of Americans who would otherwise go unserved. The economic and social benefits of this connectivity are proven, and efforts to build these networks have been met with success time and again. Thanks to the Commission's efforts, thousands of rural Americans, including an estimated 80,000 Kansas households, are now counting on CAF II to deliver essential broadband access. The June 10 NPRM has further raised hopes by more than doubling the promised download speeds from 4 Mbps to 10 Mbps, and we commend this goal.

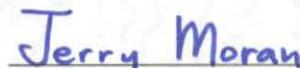
We acknowledge the Commission's constructive ideas that could help achieve greater bandwidth goals without exceeding the CAF II annual budget. In this same spirit, we urge that the CAF II funding period be extended from the current 5 years to 10 years to allow providers adequate time for the construction of higher-capacity networks, and we recommend the Commission adopt more flexible build-out parameters.

We also encourage the Commission to be as precise as possible when targeting support to areas where broadband would not otherwise be available. CAF II standards should avoid spending federal money to reach customers who already have access to broadband service and while working to ensure all unserved Americans have access to high speed Internet service.

As the Commission continues its work to overcome the digital divide, we believe CAF II can be a valuable program to achieve this goal if commonsense rules are adopted. We look forward to working with you to achieve our shared goal of universal broadband access, and we thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,


Senator Pat Roberts


Senator Jerry Moran


Congresswoman Lynn Jenkins


Congressman Kevin Yoder