

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

October 7, 2014

1078

The Honorable Tom Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

Rural communities depend on broadband Internet access for their economic and social needs. The Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Phase II of the Connect America Fund (CAF II) would bring a faster fiber-based broadband to more than 8,500 households in Utah.

In implementing its CAF II objectives, we ask that the Commission allow flexibility in its build-out and funding requirements as it increases the broadband speed requirement from 4 Mbps to 10 Mbps. We also ask that you reconsider previously disqualified rural communities for CAF II support and ensure funding is targeted to underserved areas and not subsidizing areas where private investment already exists. Doing so will ensure that the Commission accomplishes its objectives.

As stated in the latest CAF II final notice of proposed rulemaking, increasing the broadband speed requirement to 10Mbps would increase the number of households in rural areas that could benefit under CAF II. It is commendable and advisable that the Commission achieve these goals without increasing the CAF II annual budget.

Finally, it is imperative that the Commission ensure that underserved communities are not wrongfully overlooked. Customers who were initially disqualified from broadband access based on untested assertions from providers with line of sight and capacity issues should be reconsidered for CAF II support. Now in its final phase, CAF II can still reach these customers.

Letter to FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler
October 7, 2014

By increasing the speed requirement, ensuring flexibility, and extending CAF II support to a wider rural community, the Commission will successfully accomplish its objectives and much of rural America will benefit.

Sincerely,



Senator Michael S. Lee



Senator Orrin G. Hatch



Representative Rob Bishop



Representative Jason Chaffetz



Representative Chris Stewart