

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4606

September 4, 2014

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

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Dear Chairman Wheeler,

I am writing in order to convey concerns raised by sheriffs, other members of the law enforcement community, and their Virginia members regarding the FCC's expected expansion of *FCC 13-113 Rates for Interstate Inmate Calling Services* to include intrastate calls.

Since the July 2013 workshop on *Reforming Inmate Calling Service Rates*, the FCC has had time to review rates charged by Inmate Calling Service vendors. Inmates deserve a fair and reasonable call rate that is justified by the costs, such as those to establish, maintain, and update phone systems. I understand that many localities and law enforcement community members in Virginia are in agreement. Concerns seem to lie with the possibility of a one-sized fits all approach that does not allow local priorities to have a seat at the table.

Given that \$13.5 million of annual revenue is at stake for local and regional jails, I am advocating that the Commission take a balanced approach as it considers action. I share concerns about inappropriately escalated rates, and I support a competitive environment for service providers. However, I would strongly urge that any rate changes be phased in gradually and thoughtfully in order to reduce additional transition burdens. Sheriffs often have long-term contracts with vendors, and the costs of breaking these contracts, in addition to other transition costs, should not act to compromise inmate services.

Virginia has been affected disproportionately by federal budget cuts through the sequester. At a time when state budgets have already been cut substantially, the enforcement community is understandably alarmed about how potential Inmate Calling System rate changes might affect revenues.

I hope you will continue to work with all of the relevant stakeholder groups to address these concerns, lay out a transition plan that fosters a balanced and stable policy on intrastate call rates, and act to prevent any recidivism and other unintended consequences during an ample transition period.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter, and I look forward to a timely response.

Sincerely,



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator