



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

January 29, 2015

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
United States Senate
717 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Baldwin:

Thank you for your letter regarding the implementation of certain aspects of Phase II of the Connect America Fund (CAF II). In your letter, you express concerns that the overall mission of the CAF II program could be endangered if the Commission increases the current broadband speed benchmark for program. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses in rural America have the same opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the United States of the 21st century. We are focused on updating the universal service high-cost program to ensure that we are delivering the best possible voice and broadband experiences to rural areas of states within the confines of our Connect America budget, while providing increased certainty and predictability for all carriers and a climate for increased broadband expansion.

In December 2014, the Commission adopted a *Connect America Fund Phase II Report and Order* to move forward with Connect America for price-cap carriers. While I appreciate your concern about increasing the broadband speed benchmark for CAF II, the Commission, consistent with our statutory obligation to ensure that rural Americans have access to services that are reasonably comparable to those available to their urban and suburban neighbors, voted to increase the minimum broadband speed to 10 Mbps from 4 Mbps. With respect to your concern about allowing the appropriate level of flexibility in other elements of CAF II, I note that the Order extends the term of support for price-cap carriers that accept the state-level commitment and gives those carriers more flexibility in serving those areas.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

January 29, 2015

The Honorable Ron Johnson
United States Senate
386 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Johnson:

Thank you for your letter regarding the implementation of certain aspects of Phase II of the Connect America Fund (CAF II). In your letter, you express concerns that the overall mission of the CAF II program could be endangered if the Commission increases the current broadband speed benchmark for program. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses in rural America have the same opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the United States of the 21st century. We are focused on updating the universal service high-cost program to ensure that we are delivering the best possible voice and broadband experiences to rural areas of states within the confines of our Connect America budget, while providing increased certainty and predictability for all carriers and a climate for increased broadband expansion.

In December 2014, the Commission adopted a Connect America Fund Phase II Report and Order to move forward with Connect America for price-cap carriers. While I appreciate your concern about increasing the broadband speed benchmark for CAF II, the Commission, consistent with our statutory obligation to ensure that rural Americans have access to services that are reasonably comparable to those available to their urban and suburban neighbors, voted to increase the minimum broadband speed to 10 Mbps from 4 Mbps. With respect to your concern about allowing the appropriate level of flexibility in other elements of CAF II, I note that the Order extends the term of support for price-cap carriers that accept the state-level commitment and gives those carriers more flexibility in serving those areas.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", is written over a horizontal line.

Tom Wheeler