



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

March 16, 2015

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
United States Senate
702 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Heinrich:

Thank you for contacting me regarding your concerns about the potential impact of the reforms to the universal service program's high-cost loop support (HCLS) mechanism on those living on Tribal lands and in rural areas of New Mexico. Your views on this issue are very important, and I will ensure that your letter is included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

As you note, I have personally seen the lack of communications services and infrastructure across Indian Country, which has created a history of isolation that has limited economic and educational opportunities. My trip last summer to the Pueblo of Acoma confirmed the persistent digital divide in this country with rural communities, and especially Native Americans, disproportionately bypassed by the Internet revolution. That is why expanding high-speed broadband connections to all corners of the country, including Tribal lands, is a top priority for the Commission.

The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses in rural America, including Tribal lands, 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 within the confines of our Connect America budget, while providing increased certainty and predictability for all carriers and a climate for increased broadband expansion.

As you note in your letter, in the recent *December 2014 Connect America Order*, the Commission revised the HCLS mechanism to distribute high-cost support more equitably among high-cost carriers to provide better incentives for carriers to curb waste, as it had proposed to do in April 2014. This is a near-term reform intended to help us get the most out of our USF dollars. This decision was built on an extensive record, including comments from rural carriers and their representatives, on the proposal and published Commission staff analysis of the effects of the revision.

We believe it is important to move forward with implementation of this mechanism to ensure that universal service funds are being used as cost effectively and efficiently as possible.

The National Congress of American Indians has filed a petition for reconsideration of the *December 2014 Connect America Order*, and we will give the petition full consideration. In the meantime, please be assured that we will closely monitor the effects of the interim HCLS mechanism on rate-of-return carriers, particularly those that serve Indian Country, and will revisit this issue in the event that it has unanticipated results. Meanwhile, I expect the Commission will continue to develop the record and act on long-term rate-of-return reform in the coming year, and I welcome consultation and dialogue with Tribal Nations and entities as we move forward to ensure that their voices are heard. The Commission's Office of Native Affairs and Policy (ONAP) is considering potential dates in 2015 when I can meet personally with the Tribally-owned rate-of-return carriers to discuss their concerns.

The Commission is strongly committed to working with Tribal Nations through meaningful and vigorous efforts on a regular basis. We are also committed to ensuring that Tribal concerns are appropriately considered and addressed as part of the Commission's broader efforts to improve broadband deployment throughout the United States. At the National Congress of American Indians 2014 Executive Council Winter conference, I emphasized the importance of establishing a reinvigorated Tribal consultation process that addresses many goals, including: (1) improving access to world class broadband infrastructure; (2) access to spectrum and wireless infrastructure; and (3) ensuring a diversity of media ownership voices in Indian Country. I also stressed the need for Tribal community planners and policy representatives to build relationships with the ONAP. ONAP has developed and manages a comprehensive plan to strengthen the Commission's consultation and training efforts in all regions of the country. This includes Commission-hosted regional Tribal training and consultation workshops and participation in many Indian Country outreach events. In 2014, for example, ONAP hosted five regional consultation workshops.

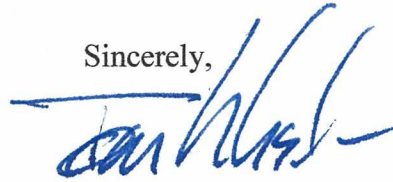
In addition, last October, the Commission took steps to reinvigorate the FCC-Native Nations Broadband Task Force, with the appointment of 31 members representing 20 Tribal Nations, including three from New Mexico, and 11 Bureaus and Offices within the Commission. The Task Force, comprised of elected and appointed leaders from federally-recognized Tribal governments or governmental entities and senior staff from across the Commission, acts as a consultative sounding board for Commission proposals and develops additional recommendations for broadband deployment and adoption. The voices of this Task Force are important to our efforts to close broadband gaps on Tribal lands and ensure that the concerns of Tribal governments are considered at the Commission. I look forward to their contributions as we work together to bring world class connectivity to Tribal Nations.

Finally, the Commission, with ONAP's leadership, plans to build upon its ongoing consultative relationship with the Tribal Nations who own and operate rate-of-return carriers. Upon ONAP's creation in 2010, the very first meeting in which ONAP staff participated in Indian Country was the National Tribal Telecommunications Association (NTTA) conference on the Gila River Indian Community in Arizona. NTTA's primary members are the eight Tribally-owned rate-of-return carriers. In each year since 2010, ONAP has actively engaged with NTTA

both in Indian Country and at the Commission. Most recently, in the summer of 2014, ONAP met with NTTA in Flagstaff, Arizona, at the offices of Hopi Telecommunications. As we move forward in 2015, the Commission plans to continue to engage and consult with Tribal Nations, NTTA, and others in Indian Country on long-term reform of rate-of-return support.

I recognize that the challenges before us are great, but the rewards could be even greater. By working together, we will seize upon technological opportunities to improve lives across Indian Country. 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", with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

March 16, 2015

The Honorable Ben Ray Luján
U.S. House of Representatives
2446 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Luján:

Thank you for contacting me regarding your concerns about the potential impact of the reforms to the universal service program's high-cost loop support (HCLS) mechanism on those living on Tribal lands and in rural areas of New Mexico. Your views on this issue are very important, and I will ensure that your letter is included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

As you note, I have personally seen the lack of communications services and infrastructure across Indian Country, which has created a history of isolation that has limited economic and educational opportunities. My trip last summer to the Pueblo of Acoma confirmed the persistent digital divide in this country with rural communities, and especially Native Americans, disproportionately bypassed by the Internet revolution. That is why expanding high-speed broadband connections to all corners of the country, including Tribal lands, is a top priority for the Commission.

The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses in rural America, including Tribal lands, 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 within the confines of our Connect America budget, while providing increased certainty and predictability for all carriers and a climate for increased broadband expansion.

As you note in your letter, in the recent *December 2014 Connect America Order*, the Commission revised the HCLS mechanism to distribute high-cost support more equitably among high-cost carriers to provide better incentives for carriers to curb waste, as it had proposed to do in April 2014. This is a near-term reform intended to help us get the most out of our USF dollars. This decision was built on an extensive record, including comments from rural carriers and their representatives, on the proposal and published Commission staff analysis of the effects of the revision.

We believe it is important to move forward with implementation of this mechanism to ensure that universal service funds are being used as cost effectively and efficiently as possible.

The National Congress of American Indians has filed a petition for reconsideration of the *December 2014 Connect America Order*, and we will give the petition full consideration. In the meantime, please be assured that we will closely monitor the effects of the interim HCLS mechanism on rate-of-return carriers, particularly those that serve Indian Country, and will revisit this issue in the event that it has unanticipated results. Meanwhile, I expect the Commission will continue to develop the record and act on long-term rate-of-return reform in the coming year, and I welcome consultation and dialogue with Tribal Nations and entities as we move forward to ensure that their voices are heard. The Commission's Office of Native Affairs and Policy (ONAP) is considering potential dates in 2015 when I can meet personally with the Tribally-owned rate-of-return carriers to discuss their concerns.

The Commission is strongly committed to working with Tribal Nations through meaningful and vigorous efforts on a regular basis. We are also committed to ensuring that Tribal concerns are appropriately considered and addressed as part of the Commission's broader efforts to improve broadband deployment throughout the United States. At the National Congress of American Indians 2014 Executive Council Winter conference, I emphasized the importance of establishing a reinvigorated Tribal consultation process that addresses many goals, including: (1) improving access to world class broadband infrastructure; (2) access to spectrum and wireless infrastructure; and (3) ensuring a diversity of media ownership voices in Indian Country. I also stressed the need for Tribal community planners and policy representatives to build relationships with the ONAP. ONAP has developed and manages a comprehensive plan to strengthen the Commission's consultation and training efforts in all regions of the country. This includes Commission-hosted regional Tribal training and consultation workshops and participation in many Indian Country outreach events. In 2014, for example, ONAP hosted five regional consultation workshops.

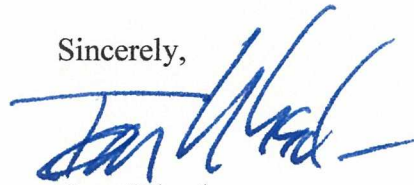
In addition, last October, the Commission took steps to reinvigorate the FCC-Native Nations Broadband Task Force, with the appointment of 31 members representing 20 Tribal Nations, including three from New Mexico, and 11 Bureaus and Offices within the Commission. The Task Force, comprised of elected and appointed leaders from federally-recognized Tribal governments or governmental entities and senior staff from across the Commission, acts as a consultative sounding board for Commission proposals and develops additional recommendations for broadband deployment and adoption. The voices of this Task Force are important to our efforts to close broadband gaps on Tribal lands and ensure that the concerns of Tribal governments are considered at the Commission. I look forward to their contributions as we work together to bring world class connectivity to Tribal Nations.

Finally, the Commission, with ONAP's leadership, plans to build upon its ongoing consultative relationship with the Tribal Nations who own and operate rate-of-return carriers. Upon ONAP's creation in 2010, the very first meeting in which ONAP staff participated in Indian Country was the National Tribal Telecommunications Association (NTTA) conference on the Gila River Indian Community in Arizona. NTTA's primary members are the eight Tribally-owned rate-of-return carriers. In each year since 2010, ONAP has actively engaged with NTTA

both in Indian Country and at the Commission. Most recently, in the summer of 2014, ONAP met with NTTA in Flagstaff, Arizona, at the offices of Hopi Telecommunications. As we move forward in 2015, the Commission plans to continue to engage and consult with Tribal Nations, NTTA, and others in Indian Country on long-term reform of rate-of-return support.

I recognize that the challenges before us are great, but the rewards could be even greater. By working together, we will seize upon technological opportunities to improve lives across Indian Country. 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", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

March 16, 2015

The Honorable Michelle Lujan Grisham
U.S. House of Representatives
214 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Grisham:

Thank you for contacting me regarding your concerns about the potential impact of the reforms to the universal service program's high-cost loop support (HCLS) mechanism on those living on Tribal lands and in rural areas of New Mexico. Your views on this issue are very important, and I will ensure that your letter is included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

As you note, I have personally seen the lack of communications services and infrastructure across Indian Country, which has created a history of isolation that has limited economic and educational opportunities. My trip last summer to the Pueblo of Acoma confirmed the persistent digital divide in this country with rural communities, and especially Native Americans, disproportionately bypassed by the Internet revolution. That is why expanding high-speed broadband connections to all corners of the country, including Tribal lands, is a top priority for the Commission.

The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses in rural America, including Tribal lands, 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 within the confines of our Connect America budget, while providing increased certainty and predictability for all carriers and a climate for increased broadband expansion.

As you note in your letter, in the recent *December 2014 Connect America Order*, the Commission revised the HCLS mechanism to distribute high-cost support more equitably among high-cost carriers to provide better incentives for carriers to curb waste, as it had proposed to do in April 2014. This is a near-term reform intended to help us get the most out of our USF dollars. This decision was built on an extensive record, including comments from rural carriers and their representatives, on the proposal and published Commission staff analysis of the effects of the revision.

We believe it is important to move forward with implementation of this mechanism to ensure that universal service funds are being used as cost effectively and efficiently as possible.

The National Congress of American Indians has filed a petition for reconsideration of the *December 2014 Connect America Order*, and we will give the petition full consideration. In the meantime, please be assured that we will closely monitor the effects of the interim HCLS mechanism on rate-of-return carriers, particularly those that serve Indian Country, and will revisit this issue in the event that it has unanticipated results. Meanwhile, I expect the Commission will continue to develop the record and act on long-term rate-of-return reform in the coming year, and I welcome consultation and dialogue with Tribal Nations and entities as we move forward to ensure that their voices are heard. The Commission's Office of Native Affairs and Policy (ONAP) is considering potential dates in 2015 when I can meet personally with the Tribally-owned rate-of-return carriers to discuss their concerns.

The Commission is strongly committed to working with Tribal Nations through meaningful and vigorous efforts on a regular basis. We are also committed to ensuring that Tribal concerns are appropriately considered and addressed as part of the Commission's broader efforts to improve broadband deployment throughout the United States. At the National Congress of American Indians 2014 Executive Council Winter conference, I emphasized the importance of establishing a reinvigorated Tribal consultation process that addresses many goals, including: (1) improving access to world class broadband infrastructure; (2) access to spectrum and wireless infrastructure; and (3) ensuring a diversity of media ownership voices in Indian Country. I also stressed the need for Tribal community planners and policy representatives to build relationships with the ONAP. ONAP has developed and manages a comprehensive plan to strengthen the Commission's consultation and training efforts in all regions of the country. This includes Commission-hosted regional Tribal training and consultation workshops and participation in many Indian Country outreach events. In 2014, for example, ONAP hosted five regional consultation workshops.

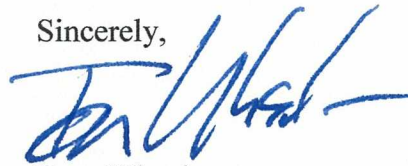
In addition, last October, the Commission took steps to reinvigorate the FCC-Native Nations Broadband Task Force, with the appointment of 31 members representing 20 Tribal Nations, including three from New Mexico, and 11 Bureaus and Offices within the Commission. The Task Force, comprised of elected and appointed leaders from federally-recognized Tribal governments or governmental entities and senior staff from across the Commission, acts as a consultative sounding board for Commission proposals and develops additional recommendations for broadband deployment and adoption. The voices of this Task Force are important to our efforts to close broadband gaps on Tribal lands and ensure that the concerns of Tribal governments are considered at the Commission. I look forward to their contributions as we work together to bring world class connectivity to Tribal Nations.

Finally, the Commission, with ONAP's leadership, plans to build upon its ongoing consultative relationship with the Tribal Nations who own and operate rate-of-return carriers. Upon ONAP's creation in 2010, the very first meeting in which ONAP staff participated in Indian Country was the National Tribal Telecommunications Association (NTTA) conference on the Gila River Indian Community in Arizona. NTTA's primary members are the eight Tribally-owned rate-of-return carriers. In each year since 2010, ONAP has actively engaged with NTTA

both in Indian Country and at the Commission. Most recently, in the summer of 2014, ONAP met with NTTA in Flagstaff, Arizona, at the offices of Hopi Telecommunications. As we move forward in 2015, the Commission plans to continue to engage and consult with Tribal Nations, NTTA, and others in Indian Country on long-term reform of rate-of-return support.

I recognize that the challenges before us are great, but the rewards could be even greater. By working together, we will seize upon technological opportunities to improve lives across Indian Country. 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", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

March 16, 2015

The Honorable Steve Pearce
U.S. House of Representatives
2432 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Pearce:

Thank you for contacting me regarding your concerns about the potential impact of the reforms to the universal service program's high-cost loop support (HCLS) mechanism on those living on Tribal lands and in rural areas of New Mexico. Your views on this issue are very important, and I will ensure that your letter is included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

As you note, I have personally seen the lack of communications services and infrastructure across Indian Country, which has created a history of isolation that has limited economic and educational opportunities. My trip last summer to the Pueblo of Acoma confirmed the persistent digital divide in this country with rural communities, and especially Native Americans, disproportionately bypassed by the Internet revolution. That is why expanding high-speed broadband connections to all corners of the country, including Tribal lands, is a top priority for the Commission.

The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses in rural America, including Tribal lands, 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 within the confines of our Connect America budget, while providing increased certainty and predictability for all carriers and a climate for increased broadband expansion.

As you note in your letter, in the recent *December 2014 Connect America Order*, the Commission revised the HCLS mechanism to distribute high-cost support more equitably among high-cost carriers to provide better incentives for carriers to curb waste, as it had proposed to do in April 2014. This is a near-term reform intended to help us get the most out of our USF dollars. This decision was built on an extensive record, including comments from rural carriers and their representatives, on the proposal and published Commission staff analysis of the effects of the revision.

We believe it is important to move forward with implementation of this mechanism to ensure that universal service funds are being used as cost effectively and efficiently as possible.

The National Congress of American Indians has filed a petition for reconsideration of the *December 2014 Connect America Order*, and we will give the petition full consideration. In the meantime, please be assured that we will closely monitor the effects of the interim HCLS mechanism on rate-of-return carriers, particularly those that serve Indian Country, and will revisit this issue in the event that it has unanticipated results. Meanwhile, I expect the Commission will continue to develop the record and act on long-term rate-of-return reform in the coming year, and I welcome consultation and dialogue with Tribal Nations and entities as we move forward to ensure that their voices are heard. The Commission's Office of Native Affairs and Policy (ONAP) is considering potential dates in 2015 when I can meet personally with the Tribally-owned rate-of-return carriers to discuss their concerns.

The Commission is strongly committed to working with Tribal Nations through meaningful and vigorous efforts on a regular basis. We are also committed to ensuring that Tribal concerns are appropriately considered and addressed as part of the Commission's broader efforts to improve broadband deployment throughout the United States. At the National Congress of American Indians 2014 Executive Council Winter conference, I emphasized the importance of establishing a reinvigorated Tribal consultation process that addresses many goals, including: (1) improving access to world class broadband infrastructure; (2) access to spectrum and wireless infrastructure; and (3) ensuring a diversity of media ownership voices in Indian Country. I also stressed the need for Tribal community planners and policy representatives to build relationships with the ONAP. ONAP has developed and manages a comprehensive plan to strengthen the Commission's consultation and training efforts in all regions of the country. This includes Commission-hosted regional Tribal training and consultation workshops and participation in many Indian Country outreach events. In 2014, for example, ONAP hosted five regional consultation workshops.

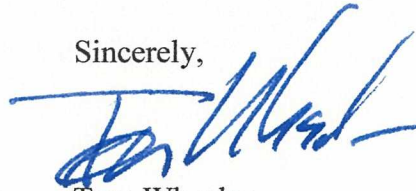
In addition, last October, the Commission took steps to reinvigorate the FCC-Native Nations Broadband Task Force, with the appointment of 31 members representing 20 Tribal Nations, including three from New Mexico, and 11 Bureaus and Offices within the Commission. The Task Force, comprised of elected and appointed leaders from federally-recognized Tribal governments or governmental entities and senior staff from across the Commission, acts as a consultative sounding board for Commission proposals and develops additional recommendations for broadband deployment and adoption. The voices of this Task Force are important to our efforts to close broadband gaps on Tribal lands and ensure that the concerns of Tribal governments are considered at the Commission. I look forward to their contributions as we work together to bring world class connectivity to Tribal Nations.

Finally, the Commission, with ONAP's leadership, plans to build upon its ongoing consultative relationship with the Tribal Nations who own and operate rate-of-return carriers. Upon ONAP's creation in 2010, the very first meeting in which ONAP staff participated in Indian Country was the National Tribal Telecommunications Association (NTTA) conference on the Gila River Indian Community in Arizona. NTTA's primary members are the eight Tribally-owned rate-of-return carriers. In each year since 2010, ONAP has actively engaged with NTTA

both in Indian Country and at the Commission. Most recently, in the summer of 2014, ONAP met with NTTA in Flagstaff, Arizona, at the offices of Hopi Telecommunications. As we move forward in 2015, the Commission plans to continue to engage and consult with Tribal Nations, NTTA, and others in Indian Country on long-term reform of rate-of-return support.

I recognize that the challenges before us are great, but the rewards could be even greater. By working together, we will seize upon technological opportunities to improve lives across Indian Country. 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", with a stylized, flowing script.

Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

March 16, 2015

The Honorable Tom Udall
United States Senate
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Udall:

Thank you for contacting me regarding your concerns about the potential impact of the reforms to the universal service program's high-cost loop support (HCLS) mechanism on those living on Tribal lands and in rural areas of New Mexico. Your views on this issue are very important, and I will ensure that your letter is included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

As you note, I have personally seen the lack of communications services and infrastructure across Indian Country, which has created a history of isolation that has limited economic and educational opportunities. My trip last summer to the Pueblo of Acoma confirmed the persistent digital divide in this country with rural communities, and especially Native Americans, disproportionately bypassed by the Internet revolution. That is why expanding high-speed broadband connections to all corners of the country, including Tribal lands, is a top priority for the Commission.

The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses in rural America, including Tribal lands, 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 within the confines of our Connect America budget, while providing increased certainty and predictability for all carriers and a climate for increased broadband expansion.

As you note in your letter, in the recent *December 2014 Connect America Order*, the Commission revised the HCLS mechanism to distribute high-cost support more equitably among high-cost carriers to provide better incentives for carriers to curb waste, as it had proposed to do in April 2014. This is a near-term reform intended to help us get the most out of our USF dollars. This decision was built on an extensive record, including comments from rural carriers and their representatives, on the proposal and published Commission staff analysis of the effects of the revision.

We believe it is important to move forward with implementation of this mechanism to ensure that universal service funds are being used as cost effectively and efficiently as possible.

The National Congress of American Indians has filed a petition for reconsideration of the *December 2014 Connect America Order*, and we will give the petition full consideration. In the meantime, please be assured that we will closely monitor the effects of the interim HCLS mechanism on rate-of-return carriers, particularly those that serve Indian Country, and will revisit this issue in the event that it has unanticipated results. Meanwhile, I expect the Commission will continue to develop the record and act on long-term rate-of-return reform in the coming year, and I welcome consultation and dialogue with Tribal Nations and entities as we move forward to ensure that their voices are heard. The Commission's Office of Native Affairs and Policy (ONAP) is considering potential dates in 2015 when I can meet personally with the Tribally-owned rate-of-return carriers to discuss their concerns.

The Commission is strongly committed to working with Tribal Nations through meaningful and vigorous efforts on a regular basis. We are also committed to ensuring that Tribal concerns are appropriately considered and addressed as part of the Commission's broader efforts to improve broadband deployment throughout the United States. At the National Congress of American Indians 2014 Executive Council Winter conference, I emphasized the importance of establishing a reinvigorated Tribal consultation process that addresses many goals, including: (1) improving access to world class broadband infrastructure; (2) access to spectrum and wireless infrastructure; and (3) ensuring a diversity of media ownership voices in Indian Country. I also stressed the need for Tribal community planners and policy representatives to build relationships with the ONAP. ONAP has developed and manages a comprehensive plan to strengthen the Commission's consultation and training efforts in all regions of the country. This includes Commission-hosted regional Tribal training and consultation workshops and participation in many Indian Country outreach events. In 2014, for example, ONAP hosted five regional consultation workshops.

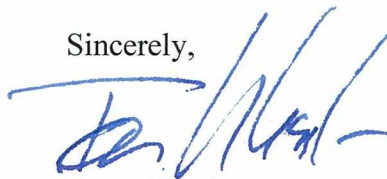
In addition, last October, the Commission took steps to reinvigorate the FCC-Native Nations Broadband Task Force, with the appointment of 31 members representing 20 Tribal Nations, including three from New Mexico, and 11 Bureaus and Offices within the Commission. The Task Force, comprised of elected and appointed leaders from federally-recognized Tribal governments or governmental entities and senior staff from across the Commission, acts as a consultative sounding board for Commission proposals and develops additional recommendations for broadband deployment and adoption. The voices of this Task Force are important to our efforts to close broadband gaps on Tribal lands and ensure that the concerns of Tribal governments are considered at the Commission. I look forward to their contributions as we work together to bring world class connectivity to Tribal Nations.

Finally, the Commission, with ONAP's leadership, plans to build upon its ongoing consultative relationship with the Tribal Nations who own and operate rate-of-return carriers. Upon ONAP's creation in 2010, the very first meeting in which ONAP staff participated in Indian Country was the National Tribal Telecommunications Association (NTTA) conference on the Gila River Indian Community in Arizona. NTTA's primary members are the eight Tribally-owned rate-of-return carriers. In each year since 2010, ONAP has actively engaged with NTTA

both in Indian Country and at the Commission. Most recently, in the summer of 2014, ONAP met with NTTA in Flagstaff, Arizona, at the offices of Hopi Telecommunications. As we move forward in 2015, the Commission plans to continue to engage and consult with Tribal Nations, NTTA, and others in Indian Country on long-term reform of rate-of-return support.

I recognize that the challenges before us are great, but the rewards could be even greater. By working together, we will seize upon technological opportunities to improve lives across Indian Country. 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", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Tom Wheeler