



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

April 9, 2015

The Honorable Jim Bridenstine
U.S. House of Representatives
216 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Bridenstine:

Thank you for your letter in support of the proposal submitted by Rural Broadband Services Corporation (RBSC) for funding from the federal universal service rural broadband experiments, as well as RBSC's application for review. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

I agree that access to digital resources and high-speed broadband services is critical for rural communities. That is why expanding high-speed broadband connections to all corners of the country 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 in Tribal lands, have the same opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the United States of the 21st century.

In the *Rural Broadband Experiments Order*, the Commission adopted a \$100 million budget for rural broadband experiments and established an objective methodology for selecting projects among formal applications for those carriers that would deploy new, robust broadband to consumers in price cap areas. The Commission required provisionally selected bidders to submit certain information and materials by a specified deadline that would enable the Bureau to undertake a financial and technical review of the selected bidders before authorizing them to receive support. Specifically, entities were required to provide the most recent three consecutive years of audited financial statements and submit a description of the technology and system design used for the project, including a network diagram certified by a professional engineer.

On December 5, 2014, the Bureau released a list of 37 entities provisionally selected as provisionally winning bidders for rural broadband experiments support. Fifteen of these bidders, including RBSC, filed petitions requesting waiver of the requirement to provide three consecutive years of audited financial statements or the requirement that its network diagram be certified by a professional engineer.

After seeking public comment on the petitions for waiver of the financial and technical requirement, the Bureau denied those petitions on January 30, 2015, concluding that the standards for waiver had not been met. The Bureau balanced the Commission's interest in conducting experiments with its duty as the steward of public funding. It determined that granting the requested waivers would not be consistent with the Commission's direction to ensure that the finite rural broadband experiments budget would be distributed to entities that provide concrete evidence of their financial and technical capability to fulfill commitments to

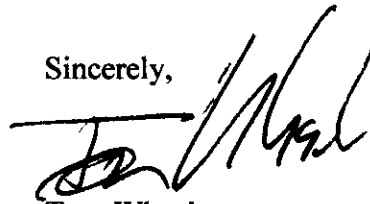
Page 2—The Honorable Jim Bridenstine

build voice and broadband capable networks, as well as provide reasonably comparable services at reasonably comparable rates.

As you note, RBSC has filed an application for review on the denial of its waiver request. I can assure you that we will give RBSC's application for review full consideration and make every effort to conclude its review as quickly and equitably as possible.

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

Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

April 9, 2015

The Honorable Tom Cole
U.S. House of Representatives
2458 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Cole:

Thank you for your letter in support of the proposal submitted by Rural Broadband Services Corporation (RBSC) for funding from the federal universal service rural broadband experiments, as well as RBSC's application for review. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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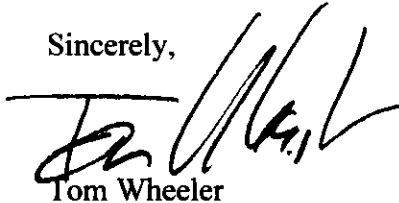
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OFFICE OF
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April 9, 2015

The Honorable James M. Inhofe
United States Senate
453 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Inhofe:

Thank you for your letter in support of the proposal submitted by Rural Broadband Services Corporation (RBSC) for funding from the federal universal service rural broadband experiments, as well as RBSC's application for review. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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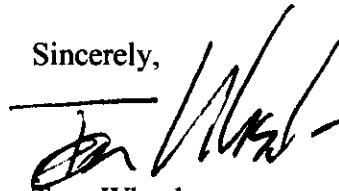
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April 9, 2015

The Honorable Markwayne Mullin
U.S. House of Representatives
1113 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Mullin:

Thank you for your letter in support of the proposal submitted by Rural Broadband Services Corporation (RBSC) for funding from the federal universal service rural broadband experiments, as well as RBSC's application for review. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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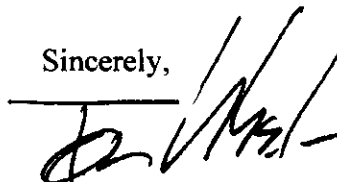
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