

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, D.C. 20515

April 28, 2015

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

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

We write to you in regard to your FY 2016 budget request to close several Federal Communications Commission (FCC) field offices. After members raised concerns during recent hearings, the commission provided information on the decision, including a two-page memo from the Chief of the Enforcement Bureau and a PowerPoint presentation prepared by outside consultants. However, significant questions remain regarding the funding of the field offices and how the commission plans to continue carrying out the core functions performed by these field office employees.

Resolution and prevention of interference between spectrum users is one of the reasons the FCC was created by Congress in the 1930s and it remains a core function of the agency today. Field offices were established to provide rapid response to interference of licensed spectrum holders, such as public safety communications and other critical communications networks. The agency has historically funded several field offices throughout different regions across the country to execute these important and often time-sensitive responsibilities. To help meet the commission's public safety goal, FCC officials have committed to Congress and to the American people that they will respond to 99 percent of complaints of interference to public safety within 24 hours.

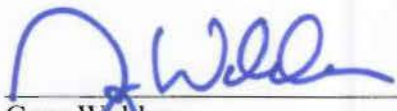
We have concerns that the proposed closures will inhibit the FCC from responding within this one-day time period. Licensed spectrum holders and public safety officials rely on the work of the field office staff for interference protection of critical communications. With only eight field offices remaining, the distance between each will expand significantly. If a license holder in a formerly served area experiences an interference issue, the closest field office agent might need to travel a considerable distance to evaluate and resolve a potentially serious situation.

To assist in our evaluation of the impact of these closures, please respond to the questions below by May 12, 2015.

1. How much does the commission expect to save by the closure of the field offices in FY 2016 and 2017? Please provide a detailed comparison table explaining these savings broken out by FTE costs, travel, rent, etc.
2. With only eight field offices and related staff remaining to provide support to the entire country, how will the Enforcement Bureau maintain the current 24 hour response time performance goal? Within the proposal, has the bureau considered changing the current performance goal with regard to the response time?
3. How does the commission plan to balance the use of "tiger teams" with field offices?
4. What regions in the country experience the highest rates of interference?
5. Regarding the proposed "realignment" of FCC field offices, you testified that currently in the field there are "more trucks than you have agents." In its FY 2013 budget request, the commission requested an increase to the base budget of \$1.1 million to purchase eight new vehicles and mobile direction finding equipment for the purpose of replacing existing vehicles that would be past their practical lifetime. Did the FCC purchase these vehicles? If so, when and at what cost?

If you have any questions, please contact David Redl of the Committee on Energy and Commerce at (202) 225-2927 or Kelly Hitchcock of the Committee on Appropriations at (202) 225-7245. We look forward to hearing from you regarding this important matter.

Sincerely,



Greg Walden  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Communications and  
Technology  
House Committee on Energy and Commerce



Ander Crenshaw  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Financial Services  
and General Government Appropriations  
House Committee on Appropriations

Cc:

The Honorable Fred Upton, Chairman,  
Committee on Energy and Commerce

The Honorable Harold Rogers, Chairman,  
Committee on Appropriations

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The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr., Ranking Member,  
Committee on Energy and Commerce

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey, Ranking Member,  
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Anna G. Eshoo, Ranking Member,  
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology

The Honorable José E. Serrano, Ranking Member,  
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government Appropriations