

BARBARA A. MIKULSKI
MARYLAND

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2003

May 20, 2015

The Honorable Tom Wheeler
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St SW
Washington, DC 20536

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

I write to express my concerns about the Commission's proposal for changing the process for findings of "effective competition" for cable companies in certain markets.

In Section 111 of the STELA Reauthorization Act of 2014 (STELAR), Congress directed the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to streamline the "effective competition" petition process for "small cable operators, particularly those who serve primarily rural areas" to seek a waiver. This provision of STELAR clearly indicates that the streamlining process should be limited to cable operators that meet the existing statutory definition of a "small cable operator."

Instead, the FCC's proposed rules would apply to all cable providers and the FCC's proposal appears to assume that all communities served by cable operators are "effectively competitive," with no obligation on cable operators to show evidence of competition in the market.

As always, my interest is in protecting my constituents' access to local news, politics, sports, cultural events, and emergency notifications. And I am concerned about the impact that this proposal could have on cable consumers by potentially making it more difficult or expensive for consumers to access certain programming.

I urge the FCC to reconsider its proposal to deregulate the cable industry and instead follow the narrow changes that Congress passed.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions, you may contact Aaron Edelman of staff at (202) 224-4654.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Mikulski
United States Senator

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