



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 27, 2015

The Honorable Don Young
U.S. House of Representatives
2314 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Young:

Thank you for your letter urging the Commission to reform our Universal Service Fund ("USF") mechanisms to support broadband deployment to tribal communities. The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses on tribal lands and in rural America have the same opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the 21st century economy. I share your goal of ensuring that the universal service program better reflects today's marketplace and technology in areas served by rate-of-return carriers.

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. As we move forward in 2015, the Commission plans to continue to engage and consult with Tribal Nations and others in Indian Country on long-term reform of rate-of-return support.

As you note, I stated at the Senate Commerce Committee's FCC Oversight Hearing earlier this year that resolving the issue of reforming USF mechanisms for areas served by rate of return carriers will require all the stakeholders to work together and make hard decisions to reach consensus on the best path forward. Everybody agrees that the goal of any changes should be supporting broadband in rural areas. With that in mind, I directed my staff and staff members from the Commission's Wireline Bureau to meet with stakeholders in the rate-of-return community. Commission staff has also engaged with tribal stakeholders regarding these issues.

We have encouraged all stakeholders in the rate-of-return community to work together to develop an approach that both has the widespread support of the rate-of-return community and meets the principles unanimously outlined by the Commission in our April 2014 *Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*. To this end, on April 28, 2015, FCC staff initiated consultative outreach with the National Tribal Telecommunications Association ("NTTA"), the association representing Tribally-owned and operated rate-of-return carriers. Additionally, on June 9th, NTTA met with my office and each of my fellow Commissioners' offices, the Wireline Bureau, and the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau's Office of Native Affairs and Policy to discuss alternatives to both model-based and non-model based proposals for rate-of-return reform. In those meetings, NTTA committed to submitting its own proposal. On June 19th,

Page 2—The Honorable Don Young

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I look forward to working with you to make continued progress on the deployment of broadband to consumers on tribal lands a reality.

Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

July 27, 2015

The Honorable John Yarmuth
U.S. House of Representatives
435 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Yarmuth:

Thank you for your letter urging the Commission to reform our Universal Service Fund ("USF") mechanisms to support broadband deployment to tribal communities. The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses on tribal lands and in rural America have the same opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the 21st century economy. I share your goal of ensuring that the universal service program better reflects today's marketplace and technology in areas served by rate-of-return carriers.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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July 27, 2015

The Honorable Peter Welch
U.S. House of Representatives
2303 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Welch:

Thank you for your letter urging the Commission to reform our Universal Service Fund ("USF") mechanisms to support broadband deployment to tribal communities. The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses on tribal lands and in rural America have the same opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the 21st century economy. I share your goal of ensuring that the universal service program better reflects today's marketplace and technology in areas served by rate-of-return carriers.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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July 27, 2015

The Honorable Frank Pallone
U.S. House of Representatives
237 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Pallone:

Thank you for your letter urging the Commission to reform our Universal Service Fund ("USF") mechanisms to support broadband deployment to tribal communities. The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses on tribal lands and in rural America have the same opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the 21st century economy. I share your goal of ensuring that the universal service program better reflects today's marketplace and technology in areas served by rate-of-return carriers.

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I look forward to working with you to make continued progress on the deployment of broadband to consumers on tribal lands a reality.

Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

July 27, 2015

The Honorable Gwen Moore
U.S. House of Representatives
2245 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Moore:

Thank you for your letter urging the Commission to reform our Universal Service Fund ("USF") mechanisms to support broadband deployment to tribal communities. The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses on tribal lands and in rural America have the same opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the 21st century economy. I share your goal of ensuring that the universal service program better reflects today's marketplace and technology in areas served by rate-of-return carriers.

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Tom Wheeler





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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

July 27, 2015

The Honorable Betty McCollum
U.S. House of Representatives
1714 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman McCollum:

Thank you for your letter urging the Commission to reform our Universal Service Fund ("USF") mechanisms to support broadband deployment to tribal communities. The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses on tribal lands and in rural America have the same opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the 21st century economy. I share your goal of ensuring that the universal service program better reflects today's marketplace and technology in areas served by rate-of-return carriers.

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Tom Wheeler





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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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July 27, 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 your letter urging the Commission to reform our Universal Service Fund ("USF") mechanisms to support broadband deployment to tribal communities. The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses on tribal lands and in rural America have the same opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the 21st century economy. I share your goal of ensuring that the universal service program better reflects today's marketplace and technology in areas served by rate-of-return carriers.

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July 27, 2015

The Honorable Derek Kilmer
U.S. House of Representatives
1429 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Kilmer:

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July 27, 2015

The Honorable Jared Huffman
U.S. House of Representatives
1630 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Huffman:

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July 27, 2015

The Honorable Anna G. Eshoo
U.S. House of Representatives
241 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Eshoo:

Thank you for your letter urging the Commission to reform our Universal Service Fund ("USF") mechanisms to support broadband deployment to tribal communities. The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses on tribal lands and in rural America have the same opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the 21st century economy. I share your goal of ensuring that the universal service program better reflects today's marketplace and technology in areas served by rate-of-return carriers.

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July 27, 2015

The Honorable Suzan DelBene
U.S. House of Representatives
318 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman DelBene:

Thank you for your letter urging the Commission to reform our Universal Service Fund ("USF") mechanisms to support broadband deployment to tribal communities. The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses on tribal lands and in rural America have the same opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the 21st century economy. I share your goal of ensuring that the universal service program better reflects today's marketplace and technology in areas served by rate-of-return carriers.

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. As we move forward in 2015, the Commission plans to continue to engage and consult with Tribal Nations and others in Indian Country on long-term reform of rate-of-return support.

As you note, I stated at the Senate Commerce Committee's FCC Oversight Hearing earlier this year that resolving the issue of reforming USF mechanisms for areas served by rate of return carriers will require all the stakeholders to work together and make hard decisions to reach consensus on the best path forward. Everybody agrees that the goal of any changes should be supporting broadband in rural areas. With that in mind, I directed my staff and staff members from the Commission's Wireline Bureau to meet with stakeholders in the rate-of-return community. Commission staff has also engaged with tribal stakeholders regarding these issues.

We have encouraged all stakeholders in the rate-of-return community to work together to develop an approach that both has the widespread support of the rate-of-return community and meets the principles unanimously outlined by the Commission in our April 2014 *Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*. To this end, on April 28, 2015, FCC staff initiated consultative outreach with the National Tribal Telecommunications Association ("NTTA"), the association representing Tribally-owned and operated rate-of-return carriers. Additionally, on June 9th, NTTA met with my office and each of my fellow Commissioners' offices, the Wireline Bureau, and the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau's Office of Native Affairs and Policy to discuss alternatives to both model-based and non-model based proposals for rate-of-return reform. In those meetings, NTTA committed to submitting its own proposal. On June 19th,

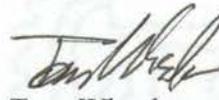
Page 2—The Honorable Suzan DelBene

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I recognize the substantial time, effort, and resources that have been invested in this effort to date by stakeholders in the rate-of-return community, and I am committed to finding a path forward by the end of the year. But it is important to have a solution – or set of solutions – that creates the right incentives to deploy modern networks throughout rural America, including tribal lands, meets the Commission's overarching policy objectives, and has the widespread support of the rate-of-return community.

I look forward to working with you to make continued progress on the deployment of broadband to consumers on tribal lands a reality.

Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 27, 2015

The Honorable Kevin Cramer
U.S. House of Representatives
1032 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Cramer:

Thank you for your letter urging the Commission to reform our Universal Service Fund ("USF") mechanisms to support broadband deployment to tribal communities. The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses on tribal lands and in rural America have the same opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the 21st century economy. I share your goal of ensuring that the universal service program better reflects today's marketplace and technology in areas served by rate-of-return carriers.

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OFFICE OF
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

July 27, 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 urging the Commission to reform our Universal Service Fund ("USF") mechanisms to support broadband deployment to tribal communities. The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses on tribal lands and in rural America have the same opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the 21st century economy. I share your goal of ensuring that the universal service program better reflects today's marketplace and technology in areas served by rate-of-return carriers.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 27, 2015

The Honorable Tony Cárdenas
U.S. House of Representatives
1508 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Cárdenas:

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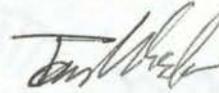
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