

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

July 1, 2015

The Honorable Thomas Wheeler  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

6669  
JUL 06 2015  
FCC Mail Room

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

We commend the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for its ongoing work to design and implement the 600 MHz Broadcast Incentive Auction (Incentive Auction). Given its propagation characteristics, 600 MHz spectrum provides a unique opportunity to ensure that consumers, small businesses, students, agriculture and energy producers and others based in rural America have access to state-of-the-art wireless broadband communication services.

Section 309(j) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, requires the agency to ensure that rural telephone companies have the opportunity to contend for spectrum in competitive bidding systems. The FCC's proposed bidding credit rules are a positive step toward promoting a competitive marketplace and ensuring rural consumers obtain wireless services that are reasonably comparable to their urban counterparts.

We are encouraged to see the proposed rules recognize the congressional intent in Section 309(j), but we recommend that the FCC adjust its rural carrier bidding credit proposal to more comprehensively address the challenges faced by rural telephone companies. A well-designed rural telco bidding credit would offer rural providers the opportunity to better compete for spectrum against providers that may concentrate resources in urban areas and leave spectrum underused in rural areas.


Rural telephone companies have a history of providing modern communication services to sparsely-populated areas and making service decisions based on the needs of the rural communities where they are based. Despite this commitment to rural connectivity and interest in obtaining additional spectrum, rural providers were virtually shut out of the recent AWS-3 auction and accounted for just 1.55 percent of the total licenses won.

Given our shared commitment to rural consumers and a successful implementation of the Incentive Auction, we urge the FCC to increase the rural provider bidding credit to help ensure that rural providers have a reasonable opportunity to obtain spectrum to serve rural consumers. We look forward to hearing from you about this important matter.

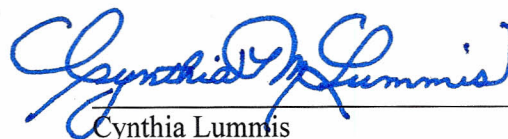
Sincerely,

Kristi Noem  
Member of Congress

Kevin Cramer  
Member of Congress



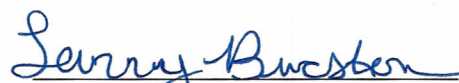
Vicky Hartzler  
Member of Congress



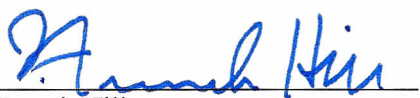
Cynthia Lummis  
Member of Congress



Rick Crawford  
Member of Congress



Larry Bucshon  
Member of Congress



French Hill  
Member of Congress