



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

September 16, 2015

The Honorable Dan Benishek
U.S. House of Representatives
514 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Benishek:

Thank you for your letter supporting Allband Communications Cooperative's (Allband) petition requesting further waiver of section 54.302 of the Commission's rules, which establishes a presumptive \$250 per month cap on total high-cost universal service support. I apologize for the tardiness of this response. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

On July 25, 2012, the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) granted Allband a three-year waiver of section 54.302 so that the carrier could receive the lesser of high-cost universal service support based on its actual costs or the annualized total high-cost support that it received for the period January 1, 2012 through June 30, 2012. The Bureau's order stated that if Allband determined that additional support above the \$250 cap was necessary after June 30, 2015, the carrier should file the financial and operational information necessary to determine what further relief is appropriate based on the specific circumstances present at that time.

On December 31, 2014, Allband filed a petition for further waiver of section 54.302 for an additional 12 years, and included audited financial statements. Allband stated that a waiver is necessary to allow the carrier to continue to provide voice services, repay its Rural Utilities Service loan, and continue operations.

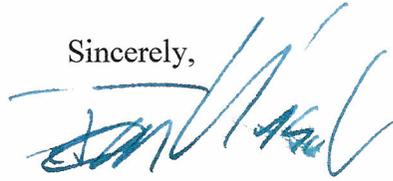
After reviewing the materials submitted, the Bureau identified certain accounting issues that require further review. Based on the information submitted, the Bureau was unable to determine the extent to which relief may be appropriate. Therefore, on June 29, 2015, the Bureau issued an order that extends Allband's previously granted petition on an interim basis, and directs the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) to undertake the necessary inquiry and report its findings to the Bureau. We expect those findings this week.

The Bureau's order extends Allband's current waiver until the earlier of either December 31, 2015, or the date on which further action is taken on the pending waiver request. This action will maintain the status quo while USAC conducts its review and the Bureau analyzes the data and arguments presented, without prejudging whether to proceed with Allband's request.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", written over a horizontal line.

Tom Wheeler