



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

March 1, 2016

The Honorable Claire McCaskill
United States Senate
730 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator McCaskill:

Thank you for your letter urging the Commission to adopt rules for the Connect America Fund (CAF) Phase II reverse auction that enable the deployment of fiber optics and other advanced networks to the greatest number of unserved households, businesses, and farms possible. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

I share your interest in bridging the rural digital divide in our country. The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure, as you emphasize, that consumers and businesses in rural America have the same opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the 21st century economy. The Commission is focused on updating the universal service high-cost program to ensure that we are delivering the best possible voice and broadband experiences to rural areas while providing a climate for increased broadband expansion, all within the confines of the Connect America Fund's budget.

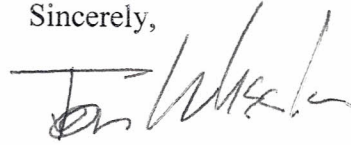
Last September, I circulated an Order for the consideration of my fellow Commissioners that would address the framework for the CAF Phase II competitive bidding process. In December, I circulated an updated draft Order that addressed concerns raised by other commissioner offices. I remain committed to completing the CAF Phase II auction framework as expeditiously as possible, and I will continue to work with my colleagues to resolve this important matter promptly.

One of the primary policy goals for this competitive bidding process is to ensure widespread participation from all providers that can deliver a high-quality service. Simply put, more competition between providers means that finite universal service funding will be used efficiently to deliver the best possible solutions. As the Commission moves forward with finalizing the structure of the CAF Phase II reverse auction, we will take into consideration the issues and concerns presented by all stakeholders and give full attention to the best ways to ensure that rural communities, including those in Missouri, have access to robust and reliable broadband service.

Page 2—The Honorable Claire McCaskill

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the first few letters.

Tom Wheeler



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THE CHAIRMAN

March 1, 2016

The Honorable Roy Blunt
United States Senate
260 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Blunt:

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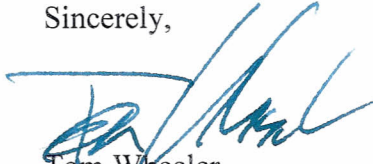
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Tom Wheeler