



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

April 7, 2016

The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senate
478 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Gillibrand:

Thank you for your letter regarding the petition filed by Westelcom Network, Inc. (Westelcom) for a limited waiver of the Commission's rules concerning the definition of a rural competitive local exchange carrier. As you note in your letter, Westelcom is seeking this waiver so that it can continue to charge the "rural exemption" rate for its interstate switched access services. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

Let me assure you that the Commission's commitment to connectivity in areas like Watertown, New York remains unwavering. Consistent with our policies, the Commission's Wireline Competition Bureau (WCB) sought public comment on Westelcom's petition shortly after the petition was filed. Commission staff is carefully reviewing the record in the proceeding. In addition, my Senior Legal Advisor, as well as WCB staff, recently met with representatives of Westelcom to further discuss the waiver petition. I promise that we will take into consideration the issues and concerns presented by all stakeholders as the Commission makes every effort to conclude its review as quickly and equitably as possible.

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", with a horizontal line above it.

Tom Wheeler



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The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

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