



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

June 10, 2016

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Pallone:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to modernize the universal service Lifeline program and expressing concerns on the establishment of a hard funding cap on the program. I share your desire to ensure that Lifeline continues to assist low income consumers with access to affordable communications services. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding.

Broadband has evolved to become a necessity. Broadband is necessary to connect individuals to employment opportunities, to complete an education, and to access important services online. At a time when our economy and lives are increasingly moving online, Lifeline must do the same. That is why transforming Lifeline for the 21st century is key to the future of this vital program.

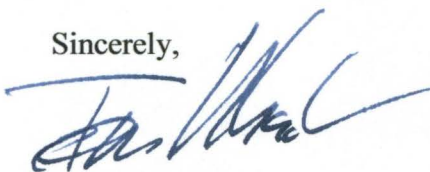
The Lifeline Modernization Order we recently adopted does just that—modernizing the program to support broadband and refocusing it to meet the 21st century's communications challenges. By dramatically improving Lifeline's management and design, and putting the program on sound fiscal footing moving forward, we will help low-income Americans all across our nation connect to the Internet and the opportunities of the broadband revolution. At the same time, the Order puts in place a number of key programmatic reforms designed to protect the integrity of the Lifeline program and build on the Commission's recent efforts to root out waste, fraud, and abuse in the program.

I understand and appreciate your opposition to a funding cap that would result in denying otherwise eligible households from participating in the program. The Order established a Lifeline budget mechanism of \$2.25 billion, indexed to inflation. This budget allows for responsible organic growth from the current spending level, based on increased participation by eligible consumers generated by the program's support for broadband service. If spending reaches 90% of the \$2.25 billion budget, the Wireline Bureau must report to the Commission about the trends and factors leading to this spending increase, and the Commission would take action as appropriate. This mechanism will ensure that the Commission has the notice and comprehensive information it needs to determine the reasons for growth in the program and to promptly make any necessary changes to the program to keep on sound financial footing.

By establishing a reasonable budget in conjunction with complementary structural reforms, our goal is to meaningfully, but responsibly, narrow the digital divide that has left 64.5 million people in the U.S.—disproportionately those with the lowest incomes—without an Internet connection. The Commission took a similar approach in setting a budget for the Connect America Fund to put the Commission on a path to responsibly modernize the high cost universal service fund. By making the program more efficient, these reforms will make Lifeline more effective at making broadband more affordable for low-income consumers.

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

Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



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June 10, 2016

The Honorable Bobby L. Rush
U.S. House of Representatives
2188 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Rush:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to modernize the universal service Lifeline program and expressing concerns on the establishment of a hard funding cap on the program. I share your desire to ensure that Lifeline continues to assist low income consumers with access to affordable communications services. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding.

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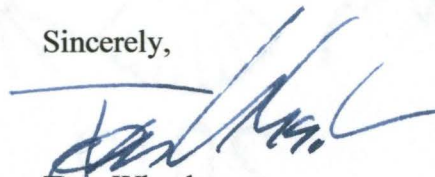
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Tom Wheeler



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June 10, 2016

The Honorable Anna G. Eshoo
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Eshoo:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to modernize the universal service Lifeline program and expressing concerns on the establishment of a hard funding cap on the program. I share your desire to ensure that Lifeline continues to assist low income consumers with access to affordable communications services. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding.

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Tom Wheeler



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OFFICE OF
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June 10, 2016

The Honorable G.K. Butterfield
U.S. House of Representatives
2305 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Butterfield:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to modernize the universal service Lifeline program and expressing concerns on the establishment of a hard funding cap on the program. I share your desire to ensure that Lifeline continues to assist low income consumers with access to affordable communications services. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding.

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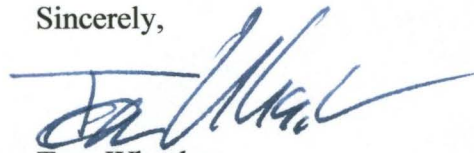
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Tom Wheeler



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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

June 10, 2016

The Honorable Yvette D. Clarke
U.S. House of Representatives
2351 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Clarke:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to modernize the universal service Lifeline program and expressing concerns on the establishment of a hard funding cap on the program. I share your desire to ensure that Lifeline continues to assist low income consumers with access to affordable communications services. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding.

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Page 2—The Honorable Yvette D. Clarke

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
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June 10, 2016

The Honorable Mike Doyle
U.S. House of Representatives
239 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Doyle:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to modernize the universal service Lifeline program and expressing concerns on the establishment of a hard funding cap on the program. I share your desire to ensure that Lifeline continues to assist low income consumers with access to affordable communications services. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding.

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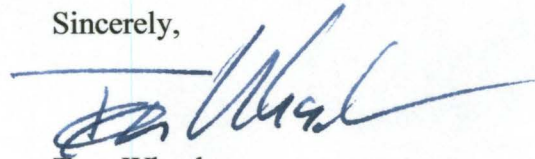
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Tom Wheeler





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

June 10, 2016

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 regarding the Commission's efforts to modernize the universal service Lifeline program and expressing concerns on the establishment of a hard funding cap on the program. I share your desire to ensure that Lifeline continues to assist low income consumers with access to affordable communications services. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding.

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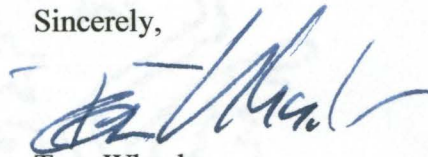
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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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THE CHAIRMAN

June 10, 2016

The Honorable Doris Matsui
U.S. House of Representatives
2311 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Matsui:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to modernize the universal service Lifeline program and expressing concerns on the establishment of a hard funding cap on the program. I share your desire to ensure that Lifeline continues to assist low income consumers with access to affordable communications services. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding.

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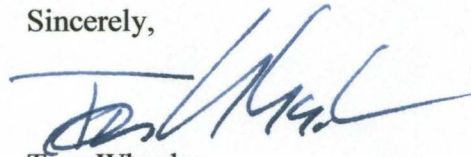
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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
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June 10, 2016

The Honorable Jerry McNerney
U.S. House of Representatives
2265 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman McNerney:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to modernize the universal service Lifeline program and expressing concerns on the establishment of a hard funding cap on the program. I share your desire to ensure that Lifeline continues to assist low income consumers with access to affordable communications services. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding.

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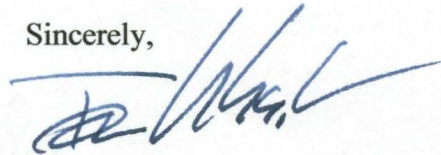
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