

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

January 25, 2017

The Honorable Ajit Pai, Chairman
The Honorable Mignon Clyburn, Commissioner
The Honorable Michael O’Rielly, Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai and Commissioners,

We appreciate that you have consistently championed efforts to expand 4G LTE and ultimately 5G mobile broadband coverage in rural America. As members of the Congressional delegation for one of the most rural states in America, we urge the Federal Communications Commission to move forward with the Mobility Fund Phase II auction.

Access to wireless technology and broadband internet is essential to economic development and competitiveness in the 21st Century. 4G LTE is the great equalizer that eliminates distance and borders—outdated restrictions to economic growth potential. It is required for commerce, necessary for modern modes of communication and indispensable to public safety. In short, broadband is fundamental to conducting daily life.

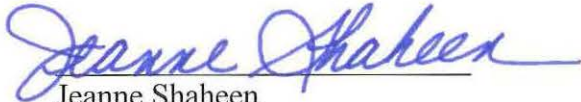
A significant factor for economic development in our rural communities lies in their ability to access wireless broadband. The FCC’s own data shows that approximately 3 million people and 750,000 road miles in the U.S. still lack access to advanced mobile wireless service. We believe that Mobility Fund Phase II has the potential to eliminate that disparity if given the proper focus.

Accordingly, we urge the Commission to move forward with the Mobility Fund Phase II auction without further delay. The Commission has compiled a full record in its proceeding and should move ahead with the program. Given the scope of impact and urgent need to address the rural access disparity, the Mobility Fund Phase II auction should be prioritized as the first auction to occur.

We support the use of Universal Service Funds in this manner because it allows rural areas to utilize high-speed technology and access more powerful networks. This has a significant impact on economic development, tourism and public safety for these communities. It is clear that industry is moving toward an overarching goal of advancing wireless standards and services, and that the Mobility Fund has the potential to help unserved and underserved rural markets bridge the divide.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter, and we look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Ann McLane Kuster
United States Representative



Maggie Hassan
United States Senator



Carol Shea-Porter
United States Representative