

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

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October 2, 2017

The Honorable Ajit Pai  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

We write to request that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) take action to address the budget shortfall in certain parts of the High-Cost Universal Service Fund (USF). As outlined in a letter sent to you last May by 160 Members of Congress, this lack of sufficient funding puts the rural communities that we represent at a significant disadvantage.

The annual budget instructions through which the High-Cost USF is funded have not been fully utilized since their implementation in 2011. Despite the appearance of surplus funds in the overall budget in prior years, the Rate of Return (ROR) carriers that benefit from High-Cost USF programs have been subject to strict and separate budget caps under actual cost recovery mechanisms and cost model support. These caps limit broadband infrastructure investments in nearly 40 percent of rural America.

Pending comprehensive FCC review or adjustment of the High-Cost USF budget instructions, we strongly urge you to maintain level collections from telecommunications companies into the future. To the extent that the collected sum exceeds High-Cost USF spending obligations at the time, the FCC should directly apply funds to help mitigate or neutralize the budget constraints applied to these smaller, rural operators.

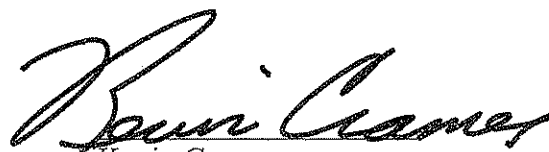
While it is currently unclear how funds that exceed High-Cost USF spending may be obligated under existing budget instructions, their continued collection has the potential to help provide rural communities with comparable broadband services for comparable rates relative to urban areas. In doing so, the country will move closer to the fund's stated mission to provide all Americans with "accessible, affordable, and pervasive high-speed connectivity."

Thank you for considering our request. We look forward to working with you to ensure that the "digital divide" does not exclude millions of rural Americans from the services that they, and our economy, depend on.

Sincerely,



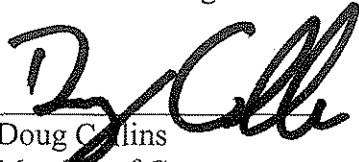
Collin C. Peterson  
Member of Congress



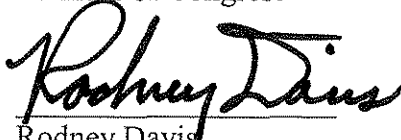
Kevin Cramer  
Member of Congress



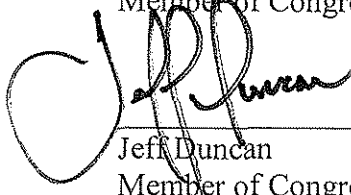
Mike Bost  
Member of Congress



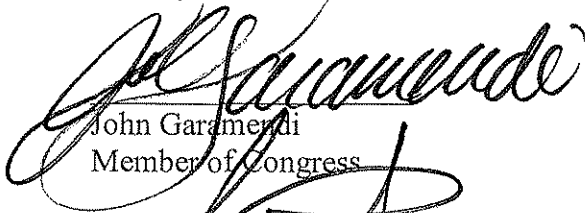
Doug Collins  
Member of Congress



Rodney Davis  
Member of Congress



Jeff Duncan  
Member of Congress



John Garamendi  
Member of Congress



Sam Graves  
Member of Congress



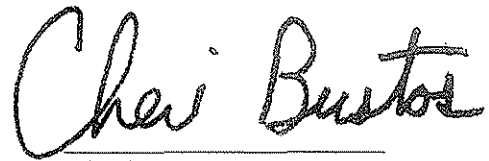
Vicky Hartzler  
Member of Congress



Ron Kind  
Member of Congress



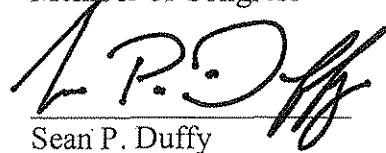
Adam Kinzinger  
Member of Congress



Cheri Bustos  
Member of Congress



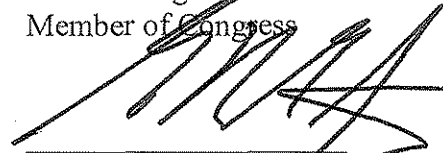
Rick Crawford  
Member of Congress



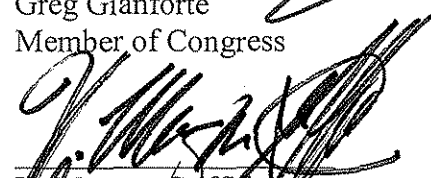
Sean P. Duffy  
Member of Congress



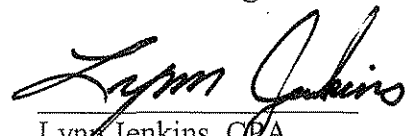
Mike Gallagher  
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Greg Gianforte  
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Morgan Griffith  
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Lynn Jenkins, CPA  
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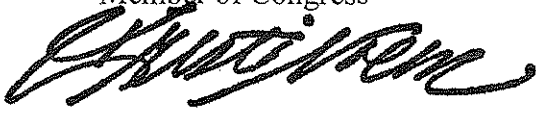
Steve King  
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Dave Loebsack  
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Roger Marshall  
Member of Congress



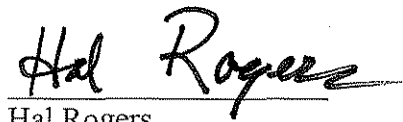
Kristi Noem  
Member of Congress



Steve Pearce  
Member of Congress



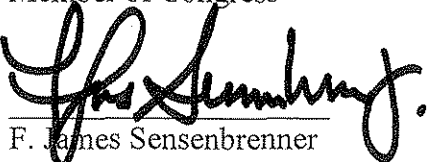
Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress



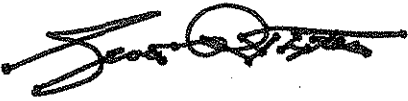
Hal Rogers  
Member of Congress



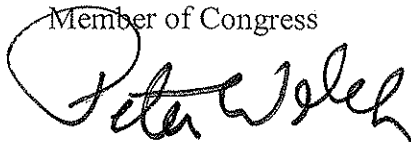
Steve Russell  
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F. James Sensenbrenner  
Member of Congress



Scott Tipton  
Member of Congress



Peter Welch  
Member of Congress



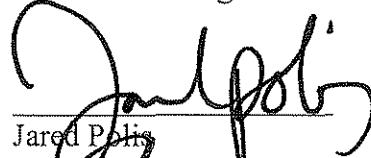
Markwayne Mullin  
Member of Congress



Rick Nolan  
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress



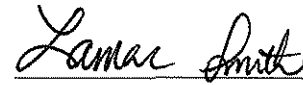
Jared Polis  
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Todd Rokita  
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Austin Scott  
Member of Congress



Lamar Smith  
Member of Congress



Nydia Velazquez  
Member of Congress