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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
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WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

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June 27, 2018

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The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

I understand that the FCC is considering, as part of its efforts to facilitate broadband deployment, "one-touch, make-ready" proposals that would allow companies seeking to add equipment to a utility pole to move existing telephone, cable and utility company equipment already located on those poles. Under this proposal, contractors, rather than employees of companies that own equipment already on poles, would be permitted to move existing equipment in order to prepare for installation of new broadband equipment.

I appreciate the value of streamlining broadband network deployment on existing utility poles and how such streamlining can advance deployment of high-speed internet networks in unserved and underserved areas. However, such streamlining must be done in a way that balances safety, minimizes service outages and preserves skilled jobs. Unsafe or improper handling of equipment on poles can create safety hazards and can lead to service interruptions. Employees of the companies that own existing equipment attached to utility poles are in the best position to know what equipment is currently installed and how to move it safely. These companies have the trained and qualified workforce needed to conduct make-ready work in the safest way possible. Furthermore, having contractors perform this work may affect collective bargaining agreements involving communications workers in Florida and around the country.

As the FCC works to ensure that all Americans have access to high-quality, affordable broadband, I ask that any utility pole make-ready policy that the FCC adopts ensures that companies which own equipment already attached to utility poles maintain control over who is permitted to move such equipment. The consequences of a make-ready system that bypasses existing companies with attachments could be very serious, both for workers responsible for the make-ready work and the public at large.

Sincerely,



BILL NELSON
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable John Thune, Chairman