

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 1, 2018

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The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

We write to share our appreciation for the commitment of \$540 million in March 2018 to help address the funding shortfall in the High Cost Universal Service Fund (USF). However, the current budget as of July 1 continues to be underfunded.

Funding shortfalls hinder our national broadband goals and we encourage immediate FCC action to fully fund the High Cost USF. This is important to ensure rural Iowans have access to high quality broadband and voice services comparable to those available to Iowans living in urban areas.

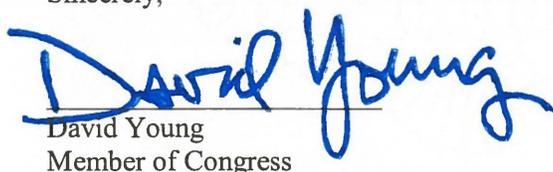
The FCC's recent High Cost USF order and the responses to its Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking confirm the need to provide—and indicate broad support for—long-term, sufficient funding to smaller rural carriers, ensuring rural consumers can have access to affordable broadband. The High Cost USF budget has remained static since 2011 and has not kept pace with technological advancements. It is critical for millions of rural Americans to set the budget to meet current demand levels and keep pace with inflation going forward.

This lack of funding could lead to a shortfall of nearly \$11 million in the State of Iowa. Undoubtedly, these reductions will require providers to postpone or cancel broadband investments, reduce the availability of rural broadband, and threaten to increase consumer rates in rural areas.

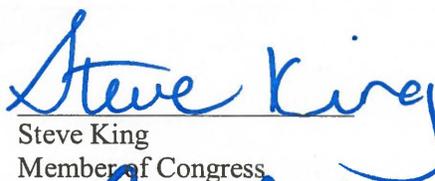
Providers are also at risk to pay back loans for investments already made, which undermines the viability and sustainability of broadband in rural areas. Rural carriers serve about 85 percent of Iowa's counties and it's crucial these companies and customers are not left behind.

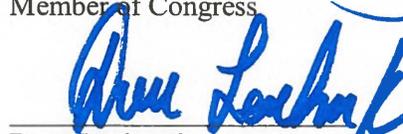
Eliminating the digital divide and promoting affordable broadband is critical for rural American consumers and businesses. We urge the Commission to act before the end of the year to fully fund the High Cost USF and put these programs on a path for success. We look forward to continuing to work with you in achieving a positive resolution on this important issue.

Sincerely,


David Young
Member of Congress


Rod Blum
Member of Congress


Steve King
Member of Congress


Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress