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Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Commissioners,

Today, only 40% of Americans in rural areas have access to reliable high-speed internet, and in rural Michigan, only a third of the population has access. While the Commission has made great strides in expanding access, the digital divide continues to impede development in rural communities.

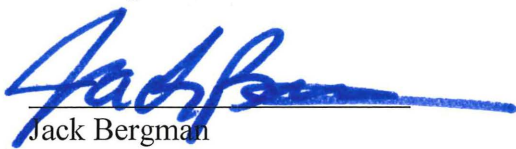
After meeting with Packerland Broadband's leadership team to discuss their ongoing projects in my district, I had the opportunity to tour their facilities to see how they are helping connect rural America. Packerland is using TV white spaces (TVWS) technology to build a network that will eventually cover more than 80,000 people in Michigan's Upper Peninsula and northern Wisconsin. Using TVWS in conjunction with other technologies – such as fiber – will reduce deployment costs and help businesses bring broadband to rural areas where connectivity challenges persist.

However, regulatory uncertainty remains a significant factor in limiting the ability of companies like Packerland to pursue needed investments in TVWS. Packerland is eager to continue deploying innovative technologies to close the digital divide in rural America; however, the current regulatory environment disincentivizes companies from making costly investments in underserved areas.

The Commission could remove regulatory barriers by finalizing proceedings related to TVWS. Specifically, sufficient spectrum below 700 MHz should be made available for unlicensed broadband use, and additional rules should be adopted to enable Internet of things (IoT) innovations like precision agriculture and smart cities. We must do everything we can to help innovators like Packerland continue expanding access – not holding them back with regulatory uncertainty.

I appreciate the Commission's efforts to bridge the digital divide and believe that removing the regulatory barriers hindering TVWS development is consistent with your goals.

Kind regards,



Jack Bergman
Member of Congress