



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

April 26, 2019

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate
425 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Klobuchar:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to encourage high-speed, reliable, affordable broadband deployment to rural communities. Since my first day as Chairman, my top priority has been closing the digital divide and bringing the benefits of the Internet age to all Americans—in particular, rural Americans who deserve access to what I call digital opportunity. And as we do so, we must demand fiscal responsibility and accountability—funds should be stretched as far as possible and they should be used for the sole purpose of delivering connectivity to consumers.

To that end, the Commission has pursued several programs to extend broadband Internet access to unserved communities. For example, the Commission last year held a "reverse auction" of federal subsidies for broadband deployment as part of Connect America Fund Phase II (CAF Phase II). With respect to the part of CAF Phase II that was directed to price cap carriers, such as Frontier, the FCC required those carriers to meet certain deployment milestones, report deployed locations, submit certain data to the Universal Service Administrative Company (a non-profit corporation which administers the Universal Service Fund on the FCC's behalf), and certify to the FCC that they have met the relevant obligations.

As you know, in 2015, the Commission authorized Frontier to receive CAF Phase II model-based support for nearly 47,000 locations in Minnesota. Before the Commission issued this authorization, Frontier provided a written commitment stating that it would satisfy the service obligations associated with this funding and acknowledging that failure to do so could result in penalties and/or enforcement actions. Since that authorization, Frontier has reported to the FCC that it has met or exceeded each of its deployment milestones in CAF-eligible areas in Minnesota and annually submitted the required reports and certifications. Moreover, the Minnesota Public Utility Commission has annually certified to the Commission that Frontier used the high-cost funds appropriately.

Nevertheless, the FCC will remain vigilant to ensure that our rules are observed and taxpayer funds respected. Accordingly, I have conveyed the information from your letter regarding the state commission's investigation to our staff and have asked them carefully to monitor this development. Thank you for bringing this aspect of the issue to my attention.

Page 2—The Honorable Amy Klobuchar

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

April 26, 2019

The Honorable Tina Smith
United States Senate
720 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Smith:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to encourage high-speed, reliable, affordable broadband deployment to rural communities. Since my first day as Chairman, my top priority has been closing the digital divide and bringing the benefits of the Internet age to all Americans—in particular, rural Americans who deserve access to what I call digital opportunity. And as we do so, we must demand fiscal responsibility and accountability—funds should be stretched as far as possible and they should be used for the sole purpose of delivering connectivity to consumers.

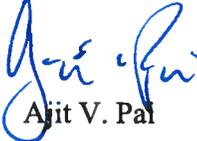
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Ajit V. Pal