

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 18, 2019

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Chairman Ajit Pai  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> St., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

We write to strongly recommend Mr. Barry Batcheller for membership on the Task Force for Reviewing Connectivity and Technology Needs of Precision Agriculture in the United States (Precision Ag Connectivity Task Force.) Mr. Batcheller's experience and expertise in the field of precision agriculture equipment will provide important perspective to the Task Force as it works to provide recommendations on how to expand Internet connectivity on farm and ranch land throughout the United States.

Mr. Batcheller began his career in 1977 as an electrical engineer at Steiger Tractor Company in Fargo, North Dakota, where his team was credited with designing the world's first fully integrated computer control system for agricultural tractors. He later founded Integrated Technical Systems, a subsidiary of Steiger Tractor, which provided advanced engineering design services and production manufacturing services in the agricultural and construction industry. From there, Mr. Batcheller founded Phoenix International Corporation, which developed electronic control systems for agricultural and construction off-highway vehicles. When this company was acquired by Deere and Company, Mr. Batcheller became the Director of Technology Growth at John Deere Electronics Solutions. Later, Mr. Batcheller founded Appareo Systems, a world leader in the development of radio receivers and transponders used by agricultural and aerospace businesses worldwide. Most recently, Appareo Systems formed a joint venture with AGCO Corporation, Intelligent Agricultural Solutions, which provides AGCO with advanced technology agricultural products.

Mr. Batcheller's long list of accomplishments in the field of agriculture and aerospace technology has not gone unrecognized. He has been named the North Dakota Business Innovator of the Year, the Fargo Chamber of Commerce Small Business Person of the Year, and the North Dakota Entrepreneur of the Year. He also holds 35 patents in these fields.

We are encouraged to see that the Federal Communications Commission is moving swiftly to establish the Precision Ag Connectivity Task Force, as required by the 2018 Farm Bill. The adoption of precision agriculture technologies provides a great opportunity to improve U.S. farm yields and productivity, but the technology cannot succeed without a quality Internet connection on farm and ranch land. It is of the utmost importance that the Task Force be comprised of experienced individuals who are well-versed in precision ag. We believe that having a member with Mr. Batcheller's qualifications serve on the Precision Ag Connectivity Task Force will be a true asset, and will greatly inform its work on a technical level.

Again, thank you for your consideration of Mr. Barry Batcheller for membership on the Precision Ag Connectivity Task Force. Should you have any questions or wish to review additional information pertaining to Mr. Batcheller's qualifications, please contact Alexis Aafedt at [Alexis.Aafedt@hoeven.senate.gov](mailto:Alexis.Aafedt@hoeven.senate.gov). We look forward to working with the Task Force, which holds the promise of offering recommendations that will benefit farmers and ranchers throughout our nation.

Sincerely,



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John Hoeven  
United States Senator



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Kevin Cramer  
United States Senator



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M. Michael Rounds  
United States Senator