



**CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES**  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

July 8, 2019

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The Honorable Ajit Pai, Michael O'Rielly, Brendan Carr, Jessica Rosenworcel and Geoffrey Starks  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Pai, Commissioner O'Rielly, Commissioner Carr, Commissioner Rosenworcel and Commissioner Starks,

I write to thank the Commission for your interest and attention to ensuring a more efficient and effective use of the 2.5 GHz spectrum band. While I appreciate the Commission's work on the draft Report, *Transforming the 2.5 GHz Band*, I am concerned that the Report hinders the ability of educational entities in rural areas to apply for unused Educational Broadband Services (EBS) licenses. I respectfully request the Commission consider providing a priority window for rural educators in counties with limited broadband availability to apply for new EBS licenses.

The proposed draft Report includes a licensing window for rural Tribal Nations to apply for unassigned EBS licenses in areas over Tribal lands. The Commission specifically states in the Order that the purpose of providing the Tribal priority window is "to promote service to areas that are currently unserved or underserved." In my view, the same argument can be made for providing a priority window for rural educators.

As you know, non-Tribal rural areas face similar broadband deployment challenges and remain unserved or underserved, such as the rural areas of Eastern and Southeastern Ohio that I represent. It is my understanding that a rural educator window could provide broadband buildout in rural communities 5 to 8 years faster than through an auction, while also ensuring an opportunity for the population most in need to obtain this spectrum. This can be accomplished by the Commission applying similar buildout requirements for educators in rural communities that are specified in the Report for rural Tribal Nations.

Thank you, again, for your consideration of my request. From past meetings with the Commission, and particularly with Chairman Pai, I know we share a commitment for closing the digital divide and ensuring that rural communities do not lag behind their urban counterparts. I look forward to continuing to work with the Commission to provide solutions that enable broadband buildout for all communities.

Sincerely,

Bill Johnson  
Member of Congress

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