



TOM O'HALLERAN

1ST DISTRICT, ARIZONA

July 30, 2019

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The Honorable Ajit V. Pai, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

I encourage the Commission to continue its ongoing work to close the digital divide and bring broadband to rural communities. Too many of the citizens and families in Arizona's First Congressional District go without broadband, limiting their access to information, educational and career resources, and cutting off communities from the global economy. As you know, unlicensed spectrum plays an important role in connecting the unserved. However, I understand that our nation's mid-band unlicensed spectrum resources cannot keep up with growing demand for services like Wi-Fi and the crucial higher-power fixed links that serve millions of rural Americans who otherwise would lack access to broadband.

I write to urge the Commission to move forward with its rulemaking proceeding on the 5.9 GHz band to address the growing need for unlicensed mid-band spectrum and to help close the digital divide. At a time when we need to make the most of our nation's limited spectrum resources, we must methodically ensure this 75 MHz of mid-band spectrum is utilized to its maximum potential. Once the Commission's rules are updated to match current technology trends, I understand that unlicensed equipment manufacturers and service providers will be able to bring this band online very quickly to bring more and better connectivity to more Americans.

Not only would opening this underutilized band for unlicensed use improve access to the Internet, it would also benefit the U.S. economy. A recent study published by RAND concludes that opening the 5.9 GHz band for unlicensed operations could contribute more than \$100 billion annually to U.S. GDP and \$190 billion in economic surplus.¹

I agree with you that it is time to take a whole new look at 5.9 GHz to modernize the FCC's approach and bring this resource into productive use. I urge the Commission to promptly issue a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and to thoroughly consider designating a significant portion of the band for unlicensed use. Closing the digital divide is a top priority of mine and is paramount for Rural America. I look forward to working with the Commission to achieve this mutual goal.

¹ Carew, et al. *Opening Up the 5.9 GHz Frequency Band for WiFi Use Could Result in Significant Economic Benefits*. RAND Corporation, 28 Nov. 2018, www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2720.html

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom O'Halleran". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tom" and last name "O'Halleran" clearly legible.

Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Michael O'Rielly, Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission
The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel, Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission
The Honorable Brendan Carr, Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission
The Honorable Geoffrey Starks, Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission