



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

December 2, 2019

Kevin Shendo
Education Director, Pueblo of Jemez
P.O. Box 100
Jemez Pueblo, NM 87024

Dear Mr. Shendo:

Kevin:

Thank you for your focus on the Commission's work to modernize and make more productive use of the 2.5 GHz spectrum band. This band is the largest contiguous block of spectrum below 3 GHz in the United States. It is unassigned in much of the country, particularly in the Western United States. And it is well suited to rural deployments. Given the potential of this key mid-band spectrum, we must make sure that the 2.5 GHz band is used to bring advanced wireless services to those who for too long have been on the wrong side of that divide.

As I've seen for myself—from the Rosebud Sioux Reservation in South Dakota to the Navajo Nation in Arizona, from the Coeur D'Alene Reservation in Idaho to the Jemez and Zia Pueblos in New Mexico (to which you graciously introduced me)—the digital divide is most keenly felt in Indian Country. I want to make sure that those committed to connecting Tribal members in rural areas are given a strong opportunity to succeed. That's why I insisted on, and the Commission included, a Tribal priority filing window in our order opening the 2.5 GHz band for additional use; that early opportunity to access this spectrum will help some of the most marginalized communities in the country.

Thank you for coming and speaking with me personally about the upcoming eligibility window as well as the work of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI). I share your view that Tribes will need sufficient time to prepare and participate in the Tribal priority window. Therefore, I am pleased to report that the Tribal priority window will open on February 3, 2020, and close on August 3, 2020. This extended 182-day window is the result of the hard work of agency staff and takes into account NCAI's recent resolution on this issue.

The FCC takes seriously its trust relationship with federally-recognized Tribal Nations, and we share the common goal of closing the digital divide in Indian Country. To this end, it is important that we collaborate to ensure that interested Tribes can take advantage of this unprecedented option. Working together, we can and will bring greater digital opportunity to everyone in Indian Country.

Sincerely,

Ajit V. Pai
Ajit V. Pai

I really appreciate your taking the time to discuss this issue with me, my friend! Hope to see you again soon.