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For Immediate Release

**FCC STAFF REPORT DETAILS POTENTIAL STATE-BY-STATE
ELIGIBILITY FOR 5G FUND AUCTION IN 2021**

***Commission Will Vote This Month to Seek Comment on Mobile Broadband
Investments Starting Either in 2021 Using Current Data or 2023 with New Data***

WASHINGTON, April 9, 2020—The Federal Communications Commission today released a staff report detailing how a plan for establishing the 5G Fund for Rural America could make as much as 67% of land in 49 states and 3 U.S. territories eligible for 5G Fund support. Later this month, the Commission will vote on a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that would seek comment on two different approaches to the 5G Fund: one using currently available data to start an auction in 2021, and a second option which would wait for new mobile broadband coverage data and begin the auction no earlier than 2023.

“Under this Administration, there has been tremendous progress in bringing 5G to the American people,” said FCC Chairman Ajit Pai. “5G networks now cover more than 200 million Americans, and T-Mobile has made enforceable commitments to the Commission to deploy its 5G network to 99% of Americans and 90% of rural Americans within six years. But I believe every American should benefit from 5G—and that’s why I have proposed a 5G Fund for Rural America. I thank our tireless staff for mapping out where in rural America we could see benefits from this new Fund if we were to move forward quickly. I look forward to reviewing the input we get from the public, state and local groups, rural providers, and others on how we can best meet our goals for bridging the digital divide.”

If adopted, the 5G Fund for Rural America would distribute up to \$9 billion across the country for 5G connectivity, with \$8 billion available in Phase I to target rural areas unlikely to see timely deployment of 5G service absent support or under the T-Mobile transaction commitments. If adopted, this Notice of Proposed Rulemaking would seek comment on two options the Commission could take in implementing the first phase of the 5G Fund.

Under one approach, the Commission would hold an auction in 2021 by defining eligible areas based on current data sources that identify areas as particularly rural and thus in the greatest need of universal service support and prioritize funding to areas that have historically lacked 4G LTE or even 3G service. The second approach would delay the 5G Fund Phase I auction until at least 2023, after collecting and processing improved mobile broadband coverage data through the Commission’s new Digital Opportunity Data Collection. The FCC will vote to begin seeking comment on this proposed program at its April 23 Open Meeting.

The staff report details how much of each state’s area and population could be eligible for funding for next-generation 5G wireless service if the auction proceeds in 2021. The report includes maps showing how this approach could impact each state.

The report demonstrates, for example, that with this investment approach, 92% of Nebraska’s land, 91% of North Dakota, 90% of South Dakota, 89% of Montana, 86% of Wyoming, 85% of Vermont, 85% of Kansas, 83% of Maine, 81% of Colorado, and 81% of Idaho would be potentially eligible to receive funding for 5G service. In terms of population, 47% of Vermonters, 34% of Mainers, 33% of Montanans, 33% of North Dakotans, 32% of South Dakotans, 31% of Mississippians, 27% of Kentuckians, 26% of Wyomingites, 24% of New Hampshireites, and 23% of Iowans live in areas that would potentially be eligible to receive funding. The report notes that the areas potentially eligible for Phase I support under Option A represent an upper bound on eligibility, and the actual areas that would be eligible in the Phase I auction may be reduced due to T-Mobile’s binding 5G commitments.

The staff report, entitled “Working Toward the 5G Fund for Rural America: Option A Eligibility Analysis,” is available at: <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-363633A1.pdf>

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