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For Immediate Release**COMMISSIONER STARKS ON CONGRESSIONAL LETTER SEEKING
INTERAGENCY COORDINATION OF LIFELINE PROGRAM**

WASHINGTON, April 27, 2020—Today, Senator Amy Klobuchar, Senator Dick Durbin, Congresswoman Marcia Fudge and Congresswoman Anna Eshoo along with an additional 38 Senators and 102 House Members sent a letter to the Chairman about the cooperation between the Federal Communications Commission, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to promote the Lifeline program—the only federal subsidy that gives low-income Americans access to voice and broadband services.

“Lifeline is the only federal program with the sole mission of bringing affordable communications to low-income Americans, and it is a critical aspect of our social safety net during the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, we know that the number of Americans enrolling in the Lifeline program has remained relatively flat during this crisis, especially in comparison to the surging SNAP applications. Unfortunately, many eligible subscribers who could benefit from the Lifeline program are unaware that it exists. Only 7 million subscribers are enrolled in Lifeline and approximately 38 million are eligible. I have called for the Commission to coordinate with agencies that administer services that determine Lifeline eligibility including USDA, HHS, VA, SSA, HUD, and BIA to better inform low-income consumers about this program. I commend Senator Klobuchar, Senator Durbin, Congresswoman Fudge, and Congresswoman Eshoo for their passionate leadership and advocacy in ensuring the Commission makes Lifeline subscribership a priority,” said Commissioner Starks.

Commissioner Starks adds, “Americans cannot afford for our government to work in silos right now. If you newly enroll in a qualifying program for our social safety net, like SNAP or Medicaid, you qualify for Lifeline. There are natural synergies here, and we must take advantage. One way or another, new enrollees of these programs must immediately learn about the benefits of Lifeline and how to sign up for it. I am committed to making sure that we use all of the necessary tools within our authority to partner with the appropriate federal agencies to increase participation in the Commission’s Lifeline program. Now is the time to step up and connect our most vulnerable households.”