



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

August 27, 2020

The Honorable Stacey Plaskett
U.S. House of Representatives
2404 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Plaskett:

Thank you for your letter regarding Stage 2 of the Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund and Connect USVI Fund, and the Commission's efforts regarding the communications restoration efforts in the U.S. Virgin Islands after Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria.

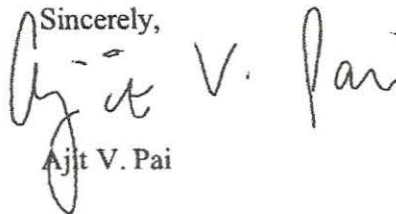
I agree that bringing high-speed resilient broadband connectivity to the Virgin Islands can be transformative, particularly with the economic, health care, educational, and civic services it enables. Our long-term goal is to facilitate the deployment of fast, resilient, and reliable broadband networks that will stand the test of time and provide digital opportunity to all Americans living the U.S. Virgin Islands. That's why we expanded the Connect USVI Fund in 2019, allocating more than \$180 million over ten years that will be distributed through a competitive process in which service providers will bid to provide fixed voice and broadband service.

I agree with you that the initial financial requirements imposed on potential Connect USVI Fund winners were too onerous, and that's why I am pleased the Commission's Wireline Competition Bureau reexamined them earlier this month. Notably, the Bureau reduced the monetary value required for letters of credit for the Stage 2 competitive process winners to bring the requirements in line with the lower letter of credit requirements bidders in the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund must comply with. This will both enable Stage 2 winning applicants to allocate more funding to broadband network deployment rather than bank fees, and incentivize faster deployment on the islands.

By resolving these issues, the Bureau was able to announce the opening of the application window for the Stage 2 competitive process of the Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund and the Connect USVI Fund on August 6. Applications are due by September 3, 2020 at 6:00 PM.

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Ajit V. Pai