

December 15, 2020

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The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

The Honorable Brendan Carr
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

The Honorable Geoffrey Starks
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Commissioners:

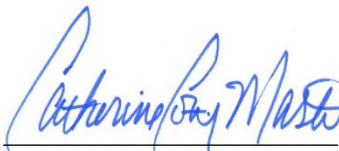
I write to you today in support of the Northern Nye County Hospital District's (NNCHD/District) application to the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Connected Care Pilot Program. NNCHD was established by the Board of Nye County Commissioners in May 2015. The purpose of the District is to facilitate the provision of accessible health care services to the residents of and visitors to Northern Nye County. They are seeking funds to help with the cost of deploying fiber optic broadband to the sole medical clinic in rural Tonopah, NV.

The project envisioned by NNCHD provides advanced telehealth bandwidth to a newly functioning medical clinic in Tonopah and to the site of a planned future acute care facility. The clinic is the latest step NNCHD is taking in an effort to rebuild healthcare in this 'Frontier' area after their only hospital closed in 2015 and is the central healthcare facility now for hundreds of miles in any direction surrounding Tonopah. Additionally, Tonopah has no medical specialists of any kind thereby leaving residents to rely on long, dangerous travel on two-lane roads for access to specialty care in Reno or Las Vegas. Taken together, the situation in Tonopah requires the NNCHD to upgrade its telehealth infrastructure.

Luckily, Tonopah sits along a major fiber-optic 'super-highway' that runs from Las Vegas in the south to Reno in the north. The project would have a service provider provide an on/off ramp from that 'super-highway' to the site of the clinic and future hospital. NNCHD envision having an appropriate fiber optic drop run to the clinic and installing all necessary hardware to make bandwidth available to the District and the current healthcare provider. The District has invested approximately \$1 million to renovate the clinic to bring it into operation during the COVID crisis. The FCC funding would allow them to take the next step in providing care for this remote community.

Given the health care crisis the country is facing, and the fact this project is supported by the locals in rural Nevada who work hard to leverage every available funding resource, I ask you to please give full and fair consideration to this crucial application for rural Nevada. If you have any questions, please contact my Grants Director at Grants@cortezmasto.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

CC: Universal Service Administrative Company, Attn: Rural Health Care Program, 700 12th Street, NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC 20005