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For Immediate Release

FCC SEEKS COMMENT ON A PROPOSAL TO SET HIGHER SPEED GOALS FOR UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUNDING SUPPORTING SMALL RURAL BROADBAND PROVIDERS

Would Also Improve Efficiency of High-Cost Universal Service Program

WASHINGTON, May 19, 2022—The Federal Communications Commission voted today to seek comment on a proposal to provide additional universal service support to certain rural carriers in exchange for increasing deployment to more locations at higher speeds. The proposal would make changes to the Alternative Connect America Cost Model (A-CAM) program, with the goal of achieving widespread deployment of faster 100/20 Mbps broadband service throughout the rural areas served by rural carriers currently receiving A-CAM support.

The ACAM Broadband Coalition submitted a proposal to create an Enhanced A-CAM program, which is the impetus for the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking adopted today. Enhanced A-CAM, as proposed, would raise the broadband speeds required by the A-CAM programs to those generally required by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, while minimizing duplicative support across different federal broadband programs. The Notice also proposes targeted modifications to the high-cost program rules to improve efficiency and efficacy in the program, including further streamlining of the annual reporting rules.

The Notice seeks comment on whether and how the Commission could:

- Offer additional A-CAM support in exchange for increased broadband deployment obligations to additional locations and at higher speeds under an Enhanced A-CAM program.
- Use the new Broadband DATA Act maps to determine any new deployment obligations.
- Calculate support for an Enhanced A-CAM program, including whether the existing A-CAM framework continues to be appropriate.
- Align specific proposals with Congressional intent, as well as programs at other agencies.
- Improve the administration of the high-cost program and better safeguard the Universal Service Fund.

Action by the Commission May 19, 2022 by Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 22-35).
Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr, Starks, and Simington approving.
Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr and Starks issuing separate statements.

WC Docket Nos. 10-90, 14-58, 09-197, 16-271

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).