



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE
CHAIRWOMAN

June 30, 2022

The Honorable Bob Latta
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ranking Member Latta:

Thank you for your letter concerning the Federal Communications Commission's Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 proposed budget and Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees. Ensuring appropriate spending levels to support the congressional mandates is a top priority for the agency and I have worked closely with our professional staff to develop a FY23 managerial plan that is both balanced and cost-effective. Moreover, I believe the American people deserve a technologically savvy and capable FCC, with the resources to handle a fast-evolving communications landscape and ensure that our nation remains globally competitive.

The FCC's FY23 request includes an FTE level roughly equivalent to the agency's staffing in 2016. However, the challenges and statutory obligations that the agency must address are different today from those in the recent past and also different from those three decades ago when the FCC had more than 2,000 employees. I believe today the agency requires a sophisticated IT workforce capable of ensuring the safety and security of data and information provided by the entities we oversee as well those who depend upon our IT to engage with the government on a variety of communications-related issues. In addition, the agency has to address resource challenges in light of a fast-moving marketplace and this requires new efforts to hire engineers, technologists, and other professionals in light of developing issues in broadband access, commercial satellite licensing, public safety, supply chain security, and efforts to lead the world in 5G and 6G technologies.

The request for increased staffing reflects our work to ensure that the FCC can fulfill its longstanding statutory duties in light of these challenges, as well as implement a number of new directives from Congress. Since FY21, the Commission has been given new obligations under multiple measures enacted by Congress. These include: (1) the PIRATE Act, which requires new efforts to address pirate radio through enforcement; (2) the Broadband DATA Act, which requires a system-wide updating of FCC data collection practices in order to develop the mapping essential for the development of updated policies supporting broadband access; (3) the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act, which requires the development of a process to address supply chain security through the removal of vulnerable equipment from our nation's

communications networks; (4) COVID-19 relief legislation, which requires the creation of new programs to support connectivity, including initiatives for telemedicine, broadband at home, and support for students and library patrons needing internet access; and (5) the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which requires the development of new programs and proceedings related to broadband access, including the Affordable Connectivity Program, efforts to address digital discrimination, and work to create industry-wide broadband labeling as well as work to coordinate ongoing broadband data collection and mapping initiatives with other local, state, and federal authorities.

Beyond these new obligations, in appropriating the FCC's funding for FY22, Congress noted how it wanted the agency to address today's challenges under its existing operations. For example, the FY22 Consolidated Appropriations Act's Explanatory Statement emphasized the need to address evolving satellite industry matters and encouraged the agency to support the further development of the industry by providing additional resources at the agency to undertake the timely review of license applications and related work of evolving satellite policy matters. In addition, the FCC was encouraged to, among other things, commit more resources to wireless resiliency efforts, expend funds and increase staff work on illegal robocalls, and continue efforts to ensure that more low-, mid- and high-band spectrum is available to support 5G service.

As you note, one of the agency's strategic goals in our FY23 request is to pursue a "100 Percent" broadband policy, under which we help bring affordable, reliable, high-speed broadband to 100 percent of the population. While the performance goals and targets for accomplishing that goal are laid out in greater detail in the request¹, the policy includes developing the essential data collection and broadband mapping work required by the Broadband DATA Act, administering our long-standing Universal Service Fund programs, developing and managing the Affordable Connectivity Program and Emergency Connectivity Fund, facilitating access to spectrum and supporting the deployment of broadband satellite systems. This cross-cutting goal involves staff in bureaus and offices across the agency, and as such, it is difficult to precisely assign a number of FTEs working on it specifically. However, the responsibilities of each of the agency's components are listed in detail in the budget request, along with the requested number of FTEs².

Finally, the agency has requested funding for a total of 565 contractors for FY23, a modest increase over 556 in FY22. Fifty of these contractors would work with the Office of Inspector General. The requested increase for FY23 for non-OIG contractors will provide for essential IT roles, which are difficult to hire on a permanent basis, but increasingly important to update and maintain systems and databases across the agency. The FCC also uses contractors for specific programmatic activities, including post-auction reimbursement work and the administration of the Secure and Trusted Communications Network Reimbursement Program, to ensure that the agency has the specific expertise required for these initiatives.

¹ See, U.S. Federal Communications Commission, 2023 Budget Estimates to Congress, at 72-76 (rel. Mar. 28, 2022), available at <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-381693A1.pdf>.

² See *id.* at 99-135.

I believe the staff of the agency has performed admirably to ensure that Congressional mandates are met with appropriate expenditures and personnel. The FCC is aware that our funding is dependent upon the fees paid by licensees, and we expend those funds in a balanced fashion, mindful of the increasing number of duties we have under the law and the need to accomplish them with the right mix of restraint, diligence, and respect. I look forward to working with Congress as you consider our FY23 budget request and continuing to manage our resources to obtain the maximum benefit for the American people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jessica Rosenworcel", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jessica Rosenworcel



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CHAIRWOMAN

June 30, 2022

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ranking Member Rodgers:

Thank you for your letter concerning the Federal Communications Commission's Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 proposed budget and Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees. Ensuring appropriate spending levels to support the congressional mandates is a top priority for the agency and I have worked closely with our professional staff to develop a FY23 managerial plan that is both balanced and cost-effective. Moreover, I believe the American people deserve a technologically savvy and capable FCC, with the resources to handle a fast-evolving communications landscape and ensure that our nation remains globally competitive.

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