

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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November 4, 2013

The Honorable Tom Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

We write to you today to request that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) remain committed to recognizing the importance of investing in rural America. We urge the FCC to continue reviewing the reforms to the Universal Service Fund (USF) and their impacts on small rate-of-return regulated telecom carriers and the rural consumers they serve in Minnesota.

Since the initial 2011 USF reform order, the FCC has made significant progress in the deployment of broadband to unserved customers in rural areas served by price-cap carriers through the Connect America Funds. However, there is continued concern about the impact of the reform order on rate-of-return carriers and their ability to further invest in their networks and bring high-speed broadband to the areas they serve. The 2011 order has caused uncertainty for these companies. Of particular concern are the impacts of the Quantile Regression Analysis on capital investment and financing for broadband deployment. While the FCC has taken some steps to provide relief from these negative impacts, the Commission should continue to move forward on addressing any lingering uncertainty.

A robust broadband infrastructure allows for rural consumers to benefit from improved health care access, education, and economic development. We urge the commission to take timely steps to re-establish predictability, sufficiency and transparency for rate-of-return carriers.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to protecting and improving communications infrastructure in rural America. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Al Franken
United States Senator

CC: Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel
Commissioner Ajit Pai
Commissioner Michael O'Rielly