



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

November 4, 2014

The Honorable Tim Johnson  
United States Senate  
136 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Johnson:

Thank you for your letter regarding call completion issues. In your letter, you urge the Commission promptly to submit the necessary Paperwork Reduction Act request to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regarding the *Rural Call Completion Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, and you request a timeline for submitting the rules for final approval and implementing the rules once approval has been granted. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

As you know, the consequences of call completion and service quality problems can be dire, impacting businesses, families, and public safety. The Commission is committed to ensuring reliable telephone service in rural America and has been attacking this problem on multiple fronts. In October 2013, the Commission adopted new rules governing the delivery of long-distance calls to rural areas, including prohibiting false ring signaling. The new rules include data retention and call completion performance reporting requirements, which will help target our enforcement efforts. The rule prohibiting false ring signaling is already in effect. The record retention, and call completion performance reporting requirements will need OMB approval before going into effect.

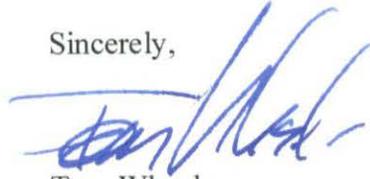
Since we issued the *Rural Call Completion Order*, but before we submitted it to OMB for approval, we received several petitions to reconsider those rules. Those petitions, if granted, would affect the submission to OMB. I have circulated an Order to my fellow Commissioners to address all the pending reconsideration petitions so that we can move forward to implement these important rules. I have directed Commission staff to be prepared to submit the necessary documentation to OMB as soon as the reconsideration Order is adopted.

As you note, the Commission also has taken enforcement actions in this area. In addition to the Consent Decree entered into with Level 3 in 2013 (\$975,000), the Enforcement Bureau earlier this year negotiated consent decrees with two major long distance providers: Windstream Corporation (\$2.5 million) and Matrix Telecom (\$875,000). We will continue to investigate the call completion practices of other voice communications providers, enforce our rules, and evaluate whether any additional measures are appropriate to ensure reliable telephone service in rural America.

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I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", written over a horizontal line.

Tom Wheeler