



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

January 16, 2015

The Honorable Mark Amodei
U.S. House of Representatives
222 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Amodei:

Thank you for your letter regarding the implementation of certain aspects of Phase II of the Connect America Fund (CAF II). In your letter, you express concerns that the overall mission of the CAF II program could be endangered if the Commission increases the current broadband speed benchmark for program. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses in rural America have the same opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the United States of the 21st century. We are focused on updating the universal service high-cost program to ensure that we are delivering the best possible voice and broadband experiences to rural areas of states within the confines of our Connect America budget, while providing increased certainty and predictability for all carriers and a climate for increased broadband expansion.

In December, the Commission adopted a *Connect America Fund Phase II Report and Order* to move forward with Connect America for price-cap carriers. While I appreciate your concern about increasing the broadband speed benchmark for CAF II, the Commission, consistent with our statutory obligation to ensure that rural Americans have access to services that are reasonably comparable to those available to their urban and suburban neighbors, voted to increase the minimum broadband speed from 4 Mbps to 10 Mbps. With respect to your concern about allowing the appropriate level of flexibility in other elements of CAF II, I note that the Order extends the term of support for price-cap carriers that accept the state-level commitment and gives those carriers more flexibility in serving those areas.

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".

Tom Wheeler