

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

490

WCB
Connect
America
USF COA

May 15, 2015

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

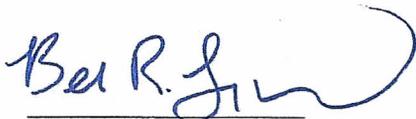
Dear Chairman Wheeler,

Access to broadband is a critical and necessary resource for all Americans to do business, communicate with family and friends, learn, and find out what is happening in the world on issues that impact them directly. Unfortunately, when it comes to broadband access, tribal communities have been disproportionately left behind. According to the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) most recent broadband progress report, nearly two-thirds of residents on tribal lands lack access to high-speed broadband. In your April 17 blog post and before the Senate Commerce Committee, you expressed that it is the FCC's intention to reform the universal service mechanism that supports rate-of-return carriers' deployment and maintenance of broadband service. This offers the Commission a unique opportunity to correct the gap in service to Tribal lands and is why we urge you to strengthen your consultation with tribes and communications providers serving these areas by truly engaging them so they can inform your decision on how reform can promote greater access to broadband.

In this regard, it is our understanding that on April 17, the FCC met with a number of stakeholders representing rate-of-return carriers and urged them to develop a consensus reform plan for the Universal Service Fund (USF) by May 17th. While the FCC did not include tribal stakeholders in that initial outreach, we understand they have since been engaged. While the delay in outreach concerns us, we know you are committed to tribal engagement and securing access to broadband for tribal lands. We urge you seek broader and deeper input from the tribal community in a timely manner.

We invite you to inform us and tribal stakeholders further on what the FCC is doing to ensure that those living on tribal lands have a seat at the table through consultation and how the FCC's efforts related to rate-of-return carriers will expand access to broadband on tribal lands.

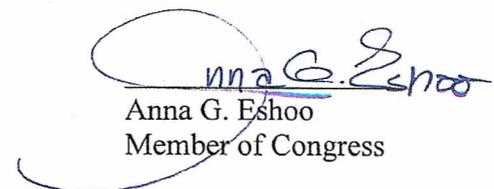
Sincerely,



Ben Ray Luján
Member of Congress

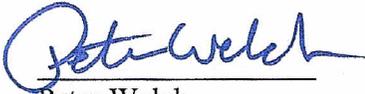


Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515



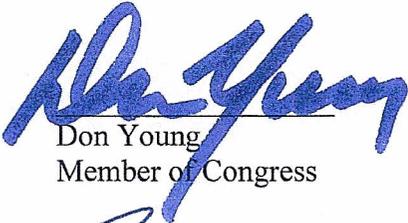
Peter Welch
Member of Congress



Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress



Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



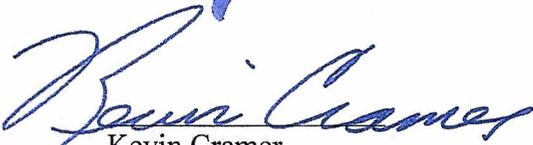
Don Young
Member of Congress



John A. Yarmuth
Member of Congress



Tom Cole
Member of Congress



Kevin Cramer
Member of Congress



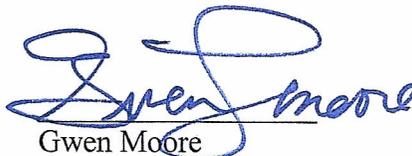
Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Cc: Commissioner Migon Clyburn
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel
Commissioner Ajit Pai
Commissioner Michael O'Rielly