



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cantwell:

Thank you for your letter urging the Commission to undertake reforms that will bridge the digital divide in Tribal lands. Your views are very important and I appreciate you sharing them with me.

I wholeheartedly agree that access to broadband technology is critical for Tribal communities to participate fully in today's economy. I personally have seen the lack of communications services and infrastructure across Indian Country, which reinforces a history of isolation that has limited economic and educational opportunities. Expanding high-speed broadband connections to all corners of the country is a top priority for the Commission. Nowhere could meeting this objective be more impactful than on Tribal lands.

In March of this year, the Commission took two separate actions that will help bridge the digital divide in Indian Country. First, the Commission modernized the Lifeline program. For more than 30 years, the Lifeline program has helped tens of millions of low-income Americans afford basic phone service. Recognizing the unique economic circumstances many Tribal Nations face, the Commission provides enhanced levels of Lifeline support to low-income residents of Tribal lands. In March, the Commission adopted an Order modernizing the Lifeline program to support broadband and refocusing it to meet the 21st century's communications challenges. Under the new rules, low-income residents of Tribal lands will soon be able to apply up to \$34.25 per month toward the cost of broadband service. This change will both reduce the cost of broadband for low-income Tribal residents and incentivize deployment of broadband infrastructure on Tribal lands.

The second action was a part of the proceeding to modernize High-Cost support for rate-of-return carriers. The Commission adopted a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, also in March, specifically seeking comment on additional reforms to further promote broadband investment and deployment on unserved and underserved Tribal lands. Staff is currently reviewing the record of that Further Notice. As you note, I have committed to taking action on this important issue by the end of the year.

The Commission also has adopted initiatives to drive investment in mobile broadband on Tribal lands. For example, in 2014 the FCC's Tribal Mobility Fund Phase I reverse auction

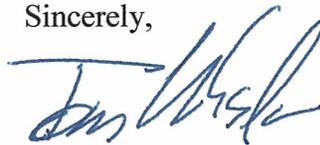
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I recognize that the challenges before us are great. But working together, we will seize upon technological opportunities to improve lives across Indian Country. I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



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September 14, 2016

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
United States Senate
303 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Heinrich:

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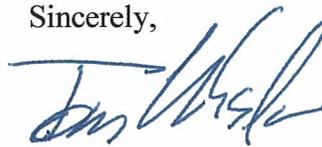
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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
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September 14, 2016

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Klobuchar:

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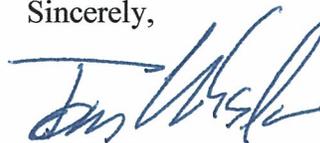
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
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September 14, 2016

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

Thank you for your letter urging the Commission to undertake reforms that will bridge the digital divide in Tribal lands. Your views are very important and I appreciate you sharing them with me.

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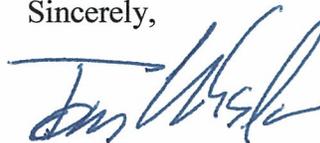
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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September 14, 2016

The Honorable Jon Tester
United States Senate
311 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Tester:

Thank you for your letter urging the Commission to undertake reforms that will bridge the digital divide in Tribal lands. Your views are very important and I appreciate you sharing them with me.

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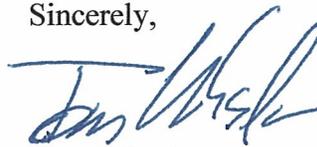
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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September 14, 2016

The Honorable Tom Udall
United States Senate
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Udall:

Thank you for your letter urging the Commission to undertake reforms that will bridge the digital divide in Tribal lands. Your views are very important and I appreciate you sharing them with me.

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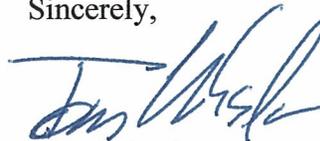
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