



United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

Received & Inspected

SEP 10 2014

FCC Mail Room

BILL NELSON  
FLORIDA

August 29, 2014

974

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

Re: WC Docket No. 10-90; CAF II Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

I write today to request that the Commission consider certain changes to Phase II of the Connect America Fund (CAF II) that may create further incentives for broadband providers to expand service in rural and underserved areas.

Broadband Internet access service is a critical part of our economy. With access to affordable high-speed broadband services, businesses are able to attract talent and compete with companies around the world. Similarly, consumers are able to connect to a wide range of educational and employment opportunities. Conversely, those communities that do not have affordable, reliable broadband access are often left behind. Through this proceeding, I believe the Commission has an opportunity to continue to bridge the digital divide in underserved Florida communities, as well as those across America.

To that end, I request that the Commission consider certain changes that were identified in the Commission's June 10, 2014, Connect America Fund Phase II Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM). First, the Commission should consider extending the CAF II funding period, within appropriate budget restraints, from the current 5 years to 10 years to allow adequate time and support for construction of higher-capacity networks. Second, the Commission should consider allowing carriers flexibility to substitute some extremely high cost areas with unserved locations in partially-served census blocks to meet deployment obligations. Finally, the Commission should consider metrics that will allow maximum precision when evaluating whether areas are "served" to ensure that all residents of a census block have access to broadband services.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of these comments, and for all of your continued efforts to bridge the digital divide.

Sincerely,

*Bill Nelson*