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## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 3, 2014

COMMITTEES:  
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION AND FORESTRY  
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The Honorable Tom Wheeler  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554-0004

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Dear Chairman Wheeler:

I write about the Connect America Fund Phase II rules currently under review and request your attention to several key issues of concern raised by providers in my state of North Dakota to enhance certainty and predictability for price cap carriers.

Providers in North Dakota, even with its vast rural spaces, have made great strides in improving access to broadband throughout the state. Yet, there are still areas of the state which present unique challenges, including our Indian reservations and the western oil region. The Connect America Fund Phase II provides an opportunity to close the digital-divide in these areas.

The Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking dated June 10, 2014, proposes to increase downstream speeds from 4mbps to 10mbps. I support the goal of proposing a speed which will be comparable to urban areas. However, I have heard concerns from providers in my state about ensuring the speed standard applies to all carriers in order to not leave anyone behind and the need for a 10 year timeframe for support to allow providers the ability to make the proper infrastructure improvements. In addition, providers have expressed the need for flexibility to substitute extremely high cost locations with unserved locations in partially served census blocks to allow these funds to reach as many people as possible.

The broadband technology we implement today will affect consumers in the years to come. In a time when access to broadband has become essential to our economy, we must make sure we are meeting the demands in a responsible, timely, and efficient manner. I hope you will take these concerns into account as you work to finalize the regulations. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Heidi Heitkamp  
United States Senate

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