



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 24, 2014

The Honorable Pat Roberts
United States Senate
109 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Roberts:

Thank you for your letter requesting that the Commission consider proposals from broadband providers to permit some flexibility in the implementation of Phase II of the Connect America Fund (CAF II). 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 such as Kansas, within the confines of our Connect America budget, all while providing increased certainty and predictability for all carriers, and a climate for increased broadband expansion.

In April of this year, the Commission adopted a *Connect America Fund Phase II Report and Order* to move forward with Connect America for price-cap carriers. In addition, in an associated *Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM)*, the Commission sought comment on a number of the issues you raise, including revising the current broadband performance obligations to require minimum speeds of 10 Mbps downstream. As you note, the *FNPRM* also seeks comment on a proposal to allow Connect America Phase II recipients more flexibility in meeting their performance obligations, including whether we should extend the term of support to longer than five years. Many price cap carriers have argued that building networks capable of providing 10 Mbps will take more time and more funding than meeting the current 4/1 Mbps speed requirement because it will require extending fiber farther into the network and deploying additional equipment. Other commenters argue that extending the Phase II term of support beyond five years will delay a competitive bidding process for the areas served by price cap carriers. The Commission's staff is reviewing the record and giving all the arguments due consideration before we move forward with any decisions.

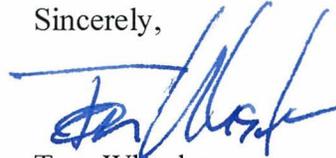
With respect to the points you raise on the importance of prudent use of universal service funds and targeting CAF II support to areas where broadband would not otherwise be available, the Commission has a responsibility to ensure that the funds we collect to support universal

service programs are used in the most efficient and effective way possible. To that point, the *FNPRM* proposes to exclude from eligibility those areas served by any provider offering voice and broadband services that meet the Commission's service obligations, regardless of whether the provider is subsidized or unsubsidized.

I welcome a dialogue with stakeholders as to how best to accomplish our shared objectives. I look forward to working with you as we continue reforming and modernizing the Universal Service Fund high-cost program – as well as other components of the Universal Service Fund – to ensure that all Americans have access to robust voice and broadband services.

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", with a horizontal line above the first few letters.

Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 24, 2014

The Honorable Lynn Jenkins
U.S. House of Representatives
1027 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Jenkins:

Thank you for your letter requesting that the Commission consider proposals from broadband providers to permit some flexibility in the implementation of Phase II of the Connect America Fund (CAF II). Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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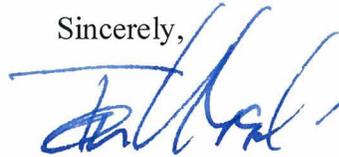
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Tom Wheeler



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WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
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October 24, 2014

The Honorable Jerry Moran
United States Senate
345 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Moran:

Thank you for your letter requesting that the Commission consider proposals from broadband providers to permit some flexibility in the implementation of Phase II of the Connect America Fund (CAF II). 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 such as Kansas, within the confines of our Connect America budget, all while providing increased certainty and predictability for all carriers, and a climate for increased broadband expansion.

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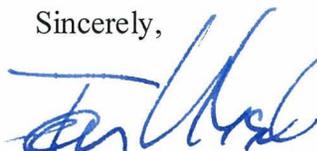
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 24, 2014

The Honorable Kevin Yoder
U.S. House of Representatives
215 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Yoder:

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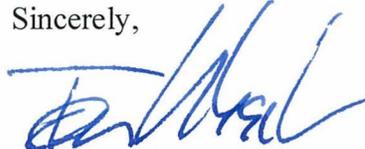
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