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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-2207

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON
HEALTH, EMPLOYMENT,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

December 19, 2017

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ACCEPTED/FILED

JAN 19 2018

The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman

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

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Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

Dear Chairman Pai:

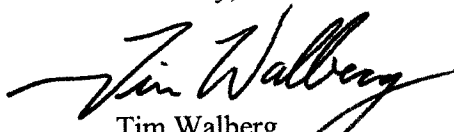
Enclosed for your consideration is a letter from 13 rural Michigan broadband providers requesting that the Commission increase funding for participants who elected to receive Alternative Connect America Model (A-CAM) support.

As you know, serving rural America poses unique challenges and rural service providers play an important role in closing the digital divide in unserved and underserved communities. Expanding broadband deployment to rural America is important to ensure these residents are connected and can compete in our global economy, and I trust you will give their comments your full consideration. I also urge you to evaluate additional universal service funding for those Michigan rural carriers not participating in the A-CAM plan to help expand broadband connectivity to consumers in my district and across the state of Michigan.

I share your belief that all Americans should be able to participate in the digital economy and I commend your leadership in encouraging greater investment in rural America. Please know I stand ready to work with you and your fellow Commissioners as you oversee the disbursement of the Universal Service Fund and consider other measures to remove barriers to deployment.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Tim Walberg
Member of Congress

Enclosure

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December 7, 2017

Ms. Marlene Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: *Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90

Dear Ms. Dortch:

The undersigned 13 Michigan rural telecommunications carriers listed in Attachment A submit this letter to ask the Federal Communications Commission to take action this year to authorize additional Alternative Connect America Model (A-CAM) funding -- up to \$200/month per eligible customer location -- so that we can further extend broadband to rural consumers in our State.

When we elected to receive A-CAM support, we made a binding commitment to deploy broadband to a specific number of additional locations if such funding is made available by December 31, 2017. With the year coming to a close, we urge you to make a decision. A decision now will enable us to plan our network upgrades in a cost-effective manner and hasten the day when rural Michigan residents will have access to broadband.

The Commission already has sought public comment on this issue, and the details of how the support would be used to advance broadband have already been resolved. The funding will be used efficiently to extend service in areas that are not served by unsubsidized competitors where, absent support, it is not economically feasible to provide broadband service.

Your decision to authorize this additional funding will have a concrete impact on the communities we serve. Collectively, additional funding of up to \$200/month per location would result in an additional 1,138 locations in Michigan having access to a minimum of 25/3 Mbps broadband service, while 2,326 locations would newly have access to service of at least 10/1 Mbps. The number of A-CAM funded locations that would remain on "reasonable request" in Michigan would decrease by 49 percent if funding is increased to this level.

Broadband is critical to economic growth and productivity in these rural areas. Increased access and improved speeds will enable residents of rural Michigan to expand their businesses and operate more efficiently.

The food and agriculture industry is a significant contributor to Michigan's overall economy. Statewide, more than 50,000 farms produce over 300 commodities, both for domestic use and export, contributing \$13 billion to the state's economy. Further extending the reach of broadband will allow Michigan farmers to access mobile apps to monitor crops and livestock, order supplies, and easily access research and expert advice. Expanding broadband in rural

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Michigan will allow small businesses to more efficiently reach their customers. It will also provide additional educational opportunities to children and young adults, a necessary foundation for employment in the future. And improved access to broadband will make it easier for the elderly to access critical services while at home, and make it possible for chronically ill individuals to be remotely monitored, resulting in cost savings.

We urge the Commission to act by the end of this year to allocate additional funding to carry out its original decision to provide A-CAM funding for up to \$200/month per eligible location.

Sincerely,

The Michigan A-CAM Companies

cc: Chairman Ajit Pai
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Michael O'Rielly
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel
Commissioner Brendan Carr

Attachment A

Attachment A
Michigan A-CAM Companies

Carr Telephone Company
Chatham Telephone Company
Communications Corporation of Michigan
Hiawatha Telephone Company
Island Telephone Company
Michigan Central Broadband Company
Midway Telephone Company
Ontonagon County Telephone Company
Sand Creek Telephone Company
Shiawassee Telephone Company
Upper Peninsula Telephone Company
Westphalia Telephone Company
Wolverine Telephone Company