

January 29, 2018

By Electronic Filing

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: *Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90;
Promoting Telehealth in Rural America, WC Docket No. 17-310;
Broadband-Enabled Health Care Solutions, GN Docket No. 16-46;
Rural Health Care Support Mechanism, WC Docket No. 02-60

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On Thursday, January 25 and Friday, January 26, Anand Vadapalli, Chief Executive Officer of Alaska Communications, Bennett Ross of Wiley Rein and I, both on behalf of Alaska Communications, met with Chairman Pai and Jay Schwarz; Commissioner O'Rielly and Amy Bender; Commissioner Carr and Jamie Susskind; and Travis Litman. On January 26, Mr. Vadapalli and I also met with Commissioner Clyburn and David Grossman. The purposes of these meetings were two-fold:

- First, Alaska Communications urged the Commission to grant the pending Petition for Reconsideration in the Connect America Fund, Phase II docket, *within the next 30 days* so the company may complete its initial list of census blocks and unserved locations to which it plans to deploy broadband in accordance with the Commission's requirements, *by the third quarter of this year*.¹
- Second, Alaska Communications thanked the Commission for beginning a rulemaking to promote telehealth in rural America by updating the rural health care ("RHC") universal service program, but emphasized the urgent need for action on funding year 2017 applications, all of which remain pending seven months into the funding year. The absence of guidance on whether and how much funding will be provided has a direct and deleterious impact on telehealth

¹ See *Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90, Order, 31 FCC Rcd 12086, ¶43 (2016).

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary

January 29, 2018

Page 2 of 2

services in rural Alaska, not only at present but also for the funding year ahead. We also discussed the feasibility of a pilot program to address the unique circumstances in and critical importance of rural healthcare to Alaska.

Please direct any questions concerning this matter to me.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Karen Brinkmann".

Karen Brinkmann

KAREN BRINKMANN PLLC

1800 M Street, N.W., Suite 800-North

Washington, D.C. 20036

(202) 365-0325

KB@KarenBrinkmann.com

Counsel to Alaska Communications