



October 15, 2018

Ex Parte Notice

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

RE: *Connect America Fund, WC Docket No. 10-90; ETC Annual Reports and Certifications, WC Docket No. 14-58; Establishing Just and Reasonable Rates for Local Exchange Carriers, WC Docket No. 07-135; Developing a Unified Intercarrier Compensation Regime, CC Docket No. 01-92*

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On Thursday, October 11, 2018, the undersigned on behalf of NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association (“NTCA”), together with Joey Anderson of Nortex Communications; Brian Boisvert of Wilson Communications; Charlie Cano of Etex Telephone Cooperative, Inc.; and Jennifer Otwell of Totelcom Communications, LLC, met separately with: (1) Arielle Roth, wireline advisor to Commissioner Michael O’Rielly; and (2) Travis Litman, chief of staff to Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel.

In each meeting, we discussed how best to address federal universal service fund (“USF”) budget concerns in response to calls from many in Congress and the commitment by the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (the “Commission”) to do so by year end. The operators thanked the Commission for efforts made earlier this year to provide some near-term or partial relief from USF budget shortfalls, and they described the positive effects of such funding on services for the benefit of consumers in their rural communities. The providers then described how each of them, however, has suffered varying impacts in terms of investments not made, customers not served at higher speeds, challenges faced in providing affordable standalone broadband, and concerns with respect to repayment of loans for broadband-capable networks already deployed as a result of continuing shortfalls in USF support distributed through either the model or the cost-based mechanisms. To address such concerns and provide longer-term sufficiency and predictability, we encouraged the Commission to take action consistent with the recent letter filed by NTCA and other stakeholders detailing a roadmap for reforms that in turn reflects the substantial consensus already in the record. *See Ex Parte* Letter from Michael R. Romano, Sr. Vice President, NTCA, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, Commission, WC Docket No. 10-90, *et al.* (filed Oct. 1, 2018).

Marlene H. Dortch
October 15, 2018
Page 2 of 2

Thank you for your attention to this correspondence. Pursuant to Section 1.1206 of the rules of the Commission, a copy of this letter is being filed via ECFS.

Sincerely,

/s/ Michael R. Romano

Michael R. Romano
Senior Vice President –
Industry Affairs & Business Development

cc: Arielle Roth
Travis Litman