In the Matter of:
Wireline Competition Bureau Seeking
Comments on E-rate Category Two   WC Docket No. 13-184

We are pleased to be able to provide input on the impact of having access to secure and sufficient funding for our library WiFi and internal connections. Before the E-rate Modernization in 2014, virtually no libraries received funds for then, Priority 2 services. Unless we were at a 90% discount rate, we could assume there would be no funding left after all requests for internet access were funded. USAC data shows that most libraries are eligible for a 70% discount or less and according to the American Library Association, many libraries stopped bothering to apply for WiFi funding. Some states have reported that none of their libraries have received WiFi funds since the beginning of the E-rate program.

In communities across the country, people turn to the library to use our WiFi on their tablets, laptops, and other devices. Library users are downloading job applications, applying for financial aid, seeking health information, and communicating with family - all dependent on a strong WiFi signal. Increasingly, libraries also provide services that depend on WiFi, like coding clubs for K12 youth. Libraries everywhere know WiFi throughout the library is not a "nice to have" - it's a core community service.

With the commitment of the FCC to ensure a library budget of $2.30 ($5.00 for a selected category of larger urban and suburban libraries) per square foot, libraries can finally upgrade outdated equipment or plan for new construction. They have confidence that desperately needed support will be there.

Please maintain secure funding through the full five year budget period as adopted during the 2014 Modernization. Our communities depend on that funding. As the lowest locally funded library system in the state of Georgia I can assure you that we rely on this money to update our existing WiFi and internal connections because our technology budget is so low that we can just cover our software licenses each year, that is about $400 for the library. We have zero funds to upgrade or offer any new technology to the 80,000 in our region. In one of our counties with a population of 30,000 only 6.8% have access to 25mpbs or above. And the public library is the only place in the county that offers free access to WiFi and computer. We do provide this access to an area that otherwise would not have any way to use what has become a necessary resource in a digital age. Please consider these situations and know what that we depend on the funding, we use it wisely and it does improve the lives of our community members.

Thank you for your time,
Cameron Asbell
Director, Ohoopee Regional Library System

Serving Jeff Davis, Montgomery, Tattnall and Toombs Counties