

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

1044

December 6, 2017

The Honorable Ajit Pai  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Chairman Pai:

I write to bring to your attention the enclosed letter from 30 rural Wisconsin broadband companies requesting the Commission act by the end of this year and increase funding for participants in the Alternative Connect America Model (A-CAM) plan. Funding the A-CAM plan as requested will result in significant additional broadband connectivity for the rural consumers in my home state.

I ask that you give this request due consideration and act before year's end to ensure more rural Wisconsin residents can fully utilize the opportunities afforded by access to broadband. I also urge you to expeditiously evaluate additional universal service funding for those Wisconsin rural carriers not participating in the A-CAM plan.

Thank you for your time and dedication to such an important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tammy Baldwin". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "T" and a cursive "Baldwin".

Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

December 1, 2017

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

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

Dear Ms. Dortch:

We are rural telecommunications carriers that elected the revised offer of Alternative Connect America Model (A-CAM) support in Wisconsin. (See Attachment A). We urge the Federal Communications Commission ("Commission") to take action, before the end of this year if possible, to authorize additional A-CAM funding up to \$200/month per eligible customer location to enable more rural consumers in Wisconsin to have the broadband connectivity necessary in today's economy.

This additional funding will result in defined and measurable progress in closing the digital divide in the State of Wisconsin. The companies in our State that elected the revised offer of A-CAM support committed to deploy broadband to a specific number of additional locations if further funding were made available by December 31, 2017. We are ready, willing and able to meet those additional broadband deployment obligations. Collectively, funding of \$200/month per location would result in an additional 2,819 locations in Wisconsin having access to a minimum of 25/3 Mbps broadband service, while 987 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 Wisconsin would decrease by 78% percent, or 1,938, if funding is increased – meaning that the carriers serving those customers will have a concrete obligation to deploy broadband to them.

There is no need for delay. The mechanism to distribute additional funds to advance broadband deployment is already in place. The additional funding will be targeted to high-cost census blocks that are not served by unsubsidized competitors where, absent support, it is not economically feasible to extend broadband service. We are already upgrading network infrastructure in our communities and are eager to further extend the reach of those networks to additional rural consumers. If we receive additional funding now, we will be able to design our network upgrades in the most efficient manner to better serve our communities.

Allocating this additional funding to further extend broadband in our communities will result in more far reaching economic and social benefits. Residents of rural Wisconsin have told us they are reluctant to expand their businesses because of the limited broadband services available to them. Further extending the reach of broadband will enable more children in our communities to do their homework at home, allow our seniors to age in place, and result in healthcare savings for the chronically ill who can be remotely monitored at

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home. With upgraded service to A-CAM locations, rural Wisconsin students will be able to more readily access a wider variety of content such as video streaming of live classes, documentaries and other educational programs.

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 Wisconsin A-CAM Companies

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

Attachment A

**Attachment A**  
**Wisconsin A-CAM Companies**

Amery Telcom, Inc.  
Badger Telecom  
Black Earth Telephone Company  
Bonduel Telephone Company  
Bruce Telephone Company  
Burlington, Brighton, & Wheatland Telephone Company  
Central State Telephone Company  
Clear Lake Telephone Company  
Coon Valley Farmers Telephone Company, Inc.  
Dickeyville Telephone  
Eastcoast Telecom  
Farmers Independent Telephone Company  
Farmers Telephone Company  
Grantland Telecom  
Hillsboro Telephone Company, Inc.  
Mid-Plains Telephone  
Midway Telephone Company  
Mosinee Telephone Company  
Mt. Vernon Telephone Company  
Riverside Telecom  
Scandinavia Telephone Company  
Somerset Telephone Company  
Southeast Telephone Company of Wisconsin  
State Long Distance Telephone Company  
Stockbridge & Sherwood Telephone Company  
Tenney Telephone Company  
Union Telephone Company  
UTELCO  
Waunakee Telephone Company  
Wittenberg Telephone Company



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

February 13, 2018

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senate  
717 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator Baldwin:

Thank you for your letter on the importance of connecting additional rural consumers in Wisconsin to high-speed broadband. Your views are very important and will be entered into the record of our proceeding on the Connect America Fund and considered as part of the Commission's review.

In my first remarks to FCC staff as Chairman, I declared that my highest priority would be making sure every American who wants high-speed Internet access can get it. Rural Americans deserve the same digital access as those living in urban areas. A key way to reach this goal is by updating the high-cost universal service program to encourage cooperatives and other small, rural carriers to build more online infrastructure.

We need more deployment in sparsely populated rural areas if we're going to extend digital opportunity to all Americans. But I've heard from community leaders, Congress, and carriers that insufficient, unpredictable funding has kept them from reaching this goal. That is why I recently shared with my fellow commissioners an order that would promote more high-speed broadband deployment in rural areas. If adopted, it would provide over \$500 million in additional funding for cooperatives and small rural carriers—including those participating in the Alternative Connect America Model (A-CAM) plan. And it seeks public input on both further increasing support to current A-CAM recipients and on giving legacy rate-of-return carriers a new chance to elect model-based support. Increased funding will boost broadband deployment in rural America, and the accompanying reforms will put our high-cost system on a more efficient path, helping to ensure that every American can benefit from the digital revolution.

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, reading "Ajit V. Pai", is positioned above the printed name.

Ajit V. Pai