

SEAN P. DUFFY
7TH DISTRICT, WISCONSIN



1120

COMMITTEE ON
FINANCIAL SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEES:
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

December 20, 2017

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

Chairman Pai:

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

Thank you for your efforts to bring broadband to rural America. Like you, I understand the importance of high-speed Internet infrastructure in rural areas. The development of broadband network is critical to raising families, growing businesses, and strengthening communities in rural Wisconsin.

Enclosed you will find a 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 rural areas, including in Wisconsin.

I respectfully request that you consider and approve the A-CAM plan as requested so that rural Wisconsin residents can fully utilize the opportunities afforded by broadband connectivity. I also urge you to evaluate additional universal service funding for those Wisconsin rural carriers who were not eligible or chose not to participate in the A-CAM plan.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Sean P. Duffy
Member of Congress

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December 1, 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:

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 Telecom, 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 Sean P. Duffy
U.S. House of Representatives
2330 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Duffy:

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 black ink that reads "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.
Ajit V. Pai