**In the Matter of:**

Wireline Competition Bureau ) WC Docket No. 13-184

Seeking Comments on E-rate Category Two )

We are pleased to provide reply comments on the impact of having access to secure and sufficient funding for our library WiFi and internal connections. We echo the call to the FCC of more than 140 libraries to ensure a fully funded and stable E-rate program, including maintaining the category two (C2) budget system for libraries. I represent a public library in a Tier 1 county.

Before the E-rate Modernization in 2014, virtually no libraries received funds for then, Priority 2 services. Comments filed in response to this Public Notice indicate libraries are taking advantage of the C2 funding made available through the Modernization. We support the points made by the American Library Association (ALA) that underscore that it is premature for the FCC to make changes to the budget system given that we are midstream in the five-year C2 system. We also support the recommendations made by ALA to make it easier and more streamlined for libraries to apply for C2 funding. This was my first time applying for E-Rate Funding. It was a difficult and cumbersome process. The online portal is poorly designed and isn’t user friendly, with almost no intuitive features. I can see why many smaller libraries would balk at the task of registering or worse, contract out the process to a third party.

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 34% of our communities identified as “rural”, we are their only access to the internet/

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($5.00 for a selected category of larger urban and suburban libraries) per square foot, libraries can finally upgrade outdated equipment or plan for new construction.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. Without this funding my library wouldn’t be able to have the critical updates needed for infrastructure improvements. We also wouldn’t be able to afford the connectivity needed for the amount of people we serve in any given day.

On an average month, over 4,000 users benefit from computer service at the Caldwell County Public Library. This number does not include our Wi-Fi users.

The FCC should maintain secure funding through the full five-year budget period as adopted during the 2014 Modernization. Our communities depend on that funding.

Lesley Mason

Library Director

Caldwell County Public Library