



PO Box 658 / Olympia, WA 98507-0658 / 1414 Cherry St. SE / Olympia, WA 98501 / 360.943.1600 / [awb.org](http://awb.org)

**VIA ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION**

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

**Re: Applications of T-Mobile US, Inc. and Sprint Corporation, WT Docket No. 18-197**

Dear Ms. Dortch,

The Association of Washington Business is the state's oldest and largest statewide business organization. Our members are companies large and small and represent virtually every corner of our state. We are proud to have T-Mobile as one of our member companies.

Back in July, the *Puget Sound Business Journal* ran the attached opinion piece, which articulates our organization's support for the pending merger of T-Mobile with Sprint. To summarize the points made in the piece, we believe that the merger will not only solidify Washington State's position as a leader in wireless, it will also have a profound effect in our rural communities.

Businesses in rural communities have largely been left behind in the connectivity and broadband revolution we've watched unfold over the last decade. Homes in these areas still lack access to broadband internet, and wireless communications can be limited and calls dropped.

The Association of Washington Business wants to see companies of all sizes, in all areas, grow and succeed. We believe that the merger of T-Mobile and Sprint, and the subsequent investment in wireless infrastructure and jobs, is the best way to achieve the vision of a stronger Washington State business community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kris Johnson", written over a white background.

Kris Johnson  
President & CEO

Attachment

cc: (via email)

Chairman Ajit Pai  
Commissioner Michael O'Rielly  
Commissioner Brendan Carr  
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel

**Kris Johnson Op-Ed:**

**PUGET SOUND BUSINESS JOURNAL: Opinion: T-Mobile-Sprint Deal Would Be A Boon For Washington's Rural Areas**

By: Kris Johnson

*Disclaimer: T-Mobile is a member of the Association of Washington Business.*

Washington is a world-class state for innovation. From Boeing, Costco and Starbucks to Microsoft and T-Mobile, we're fortunate to have more than our share of homegrown employers that started small and grew to become industry leaders thanks to a combination of hard work, a great idea and a commitment to investing in employees and communities.

One of our homegrown companies, T-Mobile, is poised to take another major step forward.

The recently announced merger with Sprint would not only help solidify the region as a wireless leader, but it would also be a benefit for Washington and the state's economy. With a plan to invest \$40 billion over the next few years in their business and network, a new T-Mobile will drive increased investment throughout the industry, benefiting consumers and employers alike.

Wireless communication has become an essential part of modern life. It's a basic infrastructure, as important as roads, bridges and water. A combined T-Mobile and Sprint company would have the capital and spectrum resources needed to make an important investment in our country's infrastructure by building a nationwide 5G network.

Around the world, the race is on to develop 5G technology, which will increase network speeds dramatically, enabling unprecedented advances in connected devices and Internet of Things (IoT) technology and spurring innovation. Some predict 5G technology will be 100 times faster than existing networks and may trigger a new wave of economic growth, boosting the nation's GDP and creating millions of new jobs throughout the country.

Here at home, the merger will be especially helpful in rural communities, where the economy has not grown at the same rate as the state's urban centers. As the state's oldest and largest statewide business association, the Association of Washington Business has taken a leading role in promoting rural job growth, including hosting two summits focused on building the rural economy.

We know from those summits and from other discussions that connectivity is one of the biggest issues facing rural communities. The combined T-Mobile/Sprint network would stretch farther and be faster in rural areas, the company reports, helping grow the state's agriculture economy and making it possible for new industries to thrive in rural communities.

And the company could play an important role in expanding broadband internet access to rural communities, as well. An estimated 200,000 to 400,000 Washingtonians lack broadband access. Mobile technology is one possible solution for delivering broadband over “the last mile” to consumers.

Washington’s economy is built on innovation and new ideas. Innovation produces new products that make our lives better, make our businesses more efficient and — sometimes — create whole new industries that we never imagined.

As this merger moves forward, we look forward to seeing the new investment and job creation that will result from a larger T-Mobile. When it’s complete, the new company will be better positioned to make the kinds of investment in infrastructure that will drive economic growth across the country, in small towns and big cities.

We look forward, as well, to the investment in employees that will result, leading to stronger communities in the Puget Sound region and throughout the state.

And we celebrate a homegrown company that’s not done growing.

*By Kris Johnson – President of the Association of Washington Business*