



April 5, 2018

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20054

Re: *Ex Parte* disclosure pursuant to 47 C.F.R. § 1.1206(b) in WC Docket Nos. 17-287, 11-42, and 09-197

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On April 3, 2018, Carmen Scurato, Gloria Tristani, and I of the National Hispanic Media Coalition (NHMC), met with Dr. Jay Schwarz, Wireline Advisor, and Mrs. Nirali Patel, Special Counsel, from the Office of Chairman Ajit Pai, to discuss Lifeline proposals detailed in WC Docket Nos. 17-287, 11-42, and 09-197, Fourth Report and Order, Order on Reconsideration, Memorandum Opinion and Order, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, and Notice of Inquiry.

Ms. Tristani stated that, since its inception, Lifeline was intended to help the poor across the country to get and stay connected to vital telecommunications network, whether living in urban or rural areas. While the Commission should explore ways to improve the program, the current proposals will unnecessarily harm people in need across the country, especially those struggling to rebuild in Puerto Rico,¹ after the devastating 2017 hurricane season. She added that the proposals would negatively impact residents in Texas² and Florida,³ states that were also impacted by the last hurricane season.

¹ National Consumer Law Center, A Lifeline That Breaks Down Barriers to Affordable Communication, <https://www.nclc.org/images/pdf/take-action/lifeline/fact-sheets/PR-LL.pdf> (last visited Apr. 5, 2018).

² National Consumer Law Center, A Lifeline That Breaks Down Barriers to Affordable Communication, <https://www.nclc.org/images/pdf/take-action/lifeline/fact-sheets/TX-LL.pdf> (last visited Apr. 5, 2018).

³ National Consumer Law Center, A Lifeline That Breaks Down Barriers to Affordable Communication, <https://www.nclc.org/images/pdf/take-action/lifeline/fact-sheets/FL-LL.pdf> (last visited Apr. 5, 2018).

Ms. Scurato added that the overwhelming majority of commenters in the docket, including public interest groups, state regulatory commissions, conservative think tanks, and service providers, agree that the Commission's lead proposals would reduce competition and create uncertainty in the program. She expanded on arguments detailed in NHMC's Lifeline comments⁴ and reply comments.⁵ For instance, proposals to eliminate the Lifeline broadband provider designation process, impose lifetime benefit limit, and introduce a self-enforcing budget cap coupled with delays to the national verifier could cripple the program.

I relayed issues raised by members of Congress, which were also articulated in a Senate letter to Chairman Ajit Pai.⁶ Eliminating the non-facilities based providers from the program means that over 70 percent of current Lifeline consumers will be disconnected from service. The Commission has neither delineated a plan for the disconnected nor provided the analysis to show that the proposals will increase program effectiveness. To the contrary, many of the proposals will drastically narrow the reach of the program, while eliminating choice and access for low income and marginalized communities across the United States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

I respectfully submit this notice of ex parte meeting pursuant to 47 C.F.R. § 1.1206(b).

Respectfully submitted,



Francella Ochillo
Director, Government & Legal Affairs
National Hispanic Media Coalition

cc: Jay Schwarz
Nirali Patel

⁴ See National Hispanic Media Coalition, Comments, WC Docket No. 17-287 (Feb. 21, 2018), <http://www.nhmc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/NHMC-Lifeline-Comments-WC-Docket-17-287-02.21.2018.pdf>.

⁵ See National Hispanic Media Coalition, Reply Comments, WC Docket Nos. 17-287, 11-42, 09-197 (Mar. 23, 2018), <http://www.nhmc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/NHMC-Lifeline-Reply-Comments-03.23.2018.pdf>.

⁶ See Letter sent from Senators Jeffrey Merkley, Kamala Harris, Benard Sanders, Kirsten Gillibrand, Edward Markey, Ron Wyden, Richards Blumenthal, Elizabeth Warren, Richard Durbin, Cory Booker to Chairman Ajit Pai (March 29, 2018), <https://www.merkley.senate.gov/news/press-releases/merkley-senators-push-back-on-fcc-proposal-to-cut-phone-and-broadband-service-from-struggling-americans>.