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EX PARTE NOTICE

April 29, 2020

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

Re: *Connect America Fund, WC Docket No. 10-90; ETC Annual Reports and Certifications, WC Docket No. 14-58.*

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On Monday, April 27, David Bartlett, Vice President of Federal Government Affairs, Randy Clarke, Vice President of Federal Regulatory Affairs, and the undersigned, on behalf of CenturyLink, met by teleconference with Preston Wise, Rural Broadband Advisor to Chairman Ajit Pai. We discussed how the Coronavirus pandemic has put a spotlight on the importance of broadband, for our whole country and economy. We also discussed CenturyLink's response to the pandemic, including the Keep Americans Connected pledge, which CenturyLink committed to at the time Chairman Pai launched it. Finally, we discussed how CenturyLink has worked tirelessly to maintain network performance with shifting usage, and deploy additional bandwidth and services, for example supporting the USNS Mercy in its mission to Los Angeles.

Like other network operators, however, CenturyLink is experiencing several pandemic-related issues that are disrupting and slowing broadband network deployment, including ongoing and planned deployment toward Connect America Fund (CAF) milestones. In some cases, localities have mandated a complete work stoppage that extends to broadband deployment. Numerous permitting agencies, particularly at the county and local level, are shut down or have scaled back operations, substantially reducing their ability to process permit applications. In addition, we are facing higher instances of backorders and product unavailability for electronics, fiber, and other equipment needed for broadband deployment. In sum, it is becoming increasingly apparent that this year's CAF deployment schedule faces significant challenges. Therefore, we reiterated the suggestions in the USTelecom filing in this and other

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dockets on March 20, 2020, including extensions to CAF deadlines.¹ Even a modest initial extension at this time would substantially reduce pressure and facilitate network operators' ability to address and successfully respond to pandemic-related challenges.

Pursuant to Section 1.1206(b) of the Commission's rules, a copy of this notice is being filed in the above-referenced dockets. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey A. Lanzetta". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent "J" and "L".

Copy via email to: Preston Wise

¹ Letter from Jonathan Spalter, President & CEO of USTelecom to Chairman Pai and Commissioners O'Rielly, Carr, Rosenworcel, and Starks, CC Dkt. 01-92, et al (March 27, 2020).