

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

221

April 10, 2019

The Honorable Ajit V. Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

We write to you in support of the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) consideration of a Report and Order that would eliminate the Universal Service Fund High-Cost program's rate floor rule and end the federal mandate that increases telephone rates for rural Americans. We applaud the Commission for giving this item timely consideration during its April 12, 2019, Open Commission Meeting.

This policy, if not eliminated, stands to disproportionately harm elderly, low-income consumers, and individuals on tribal lands in rural America by significantly raising telephone rates in rural areas. While the rate floor is temporarily frozen due to your ongoing rulemaking proceeding, the rule itself is inherently flawed and unnecessary.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and for your commitment to ensure rural Americans have affordable and reliable communications services. We encourage you and your fellow Commissioners at the FCC to strongly support the Report and Order.

Sincerely,


JOHN THUNE

United States Senator


JERRY MORAN

United States Senator

Cc: The Honorable Mike O'Rielly
Commissioner, FCC

Cc: The Honorable Brendan Carr
Commissioner, FCC

Cc: The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel
Commissioner, FCC

Cc: The Honorable Geoffrey Starks
Commissioner, FCC



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

May 6, 2019

The Honorable John Thune
United States Senate
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

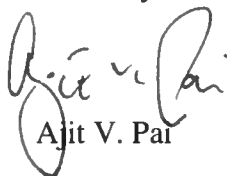
Dear Senator Thune:

Thank you for your letter on the “rate floor” rule in the Universal Service Fund’s high-cost program. The last Administration’s rate floor arbitrarily raised prices paid by rural consumers—mandating higher rates for those who can least afford them, like low-income seniors, veterans, and those living on Tribal lands.

When I became Chairman, I was determined to reexamine this perverse policy. So in 2017, we put in place a two-year freeze of the rate floor. And we asked the public whether we should eliminate the rate floor altogether. The feedback we got overwhelmingly favored consigning the rate floor rule to the ash heap of history. And, during last month’s Open Commission Meeting, the Commission unanimously voted to get rid of it. I consider this a big win for rural Americans—we repealed a *de facto* federal government mandate that increased rates paid by rural Americans.

I appreciate your interest in this matter, and please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,


Ajit V. Pai

P.S. Senator, really appreciate your longstanding advocacy in getting rid of this requirement once and for all!



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

May 6, 2019

The Honorable Jerry Moran
United States Senate
521 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

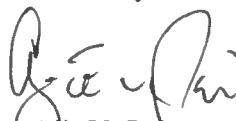
Dear Senator Moran:

Thank you for your letter on the “rate floor” rule in the Universal Service Fund’s high-cost program. The last Administration’s rate floor arbitrarily raised prices paid by rural consumers—mandating higher rates for those who can least afford them, like low-income seniors, veterans, and those living on Tribal lands.

When I became Chairman, I was determined to reexamine this perverse policy. So in 2017, we put in place a two-year freeze of the rate floor. And we asked the public whether we should eliminate the rate floor altogether. The feedback we got overwhelmingly favored consigning the rate floor rule to the ash heap of history. And, during last month’s Open Commission Meeting, the Commission unanimously voted to get rid of it. I consider this a big win for rural Americans—we repealed a *de facto* federal government mandate that increased rates paid by rural Americans.

I appreciate your interest in this matter, and please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,


Ajit V. Pai

P.S. Senator, thanks for your longstanding advocacy for repealing this requirement once and for all – consumers across our state will benefit!