

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

211

April 5, 2019

The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman
The Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

We write to encourage you to give due consideration to Westfield Gas and Electric's bid for the Connect America Fund Phase II (CAF II) auction. Should this application be approved, Westfield Gas and Electric could provide broadband access to thousands of families in Western Massachusetts.

The internet is the greatest platform for commerce and communications, providing those with access an unrivaled opportunities for business, education, entertainment, and development. But the broadband revolution has yet to touch all corners of Massachusetts. In western Massachusetts, forty-four communities are striving to achieve broadband access. Twenty communities are building municipally-owned broadband networks with speeds that will be an order of magnitude greater than the FCC's requirements. These systems are coming on-line now and throughout 2020 – a true testament to these small towns that have been digitally stranded from many of the services upon which most Americans rely.

Westfield Gas and Electric has applied for over ten million dollars from CAF II proceeds to increase access to reliable high-speed internet in Western Massachusetts. This funding would bring the crucial "last mile" connectivity to an additional 12,898 families in western Massachusetts, with broadband network coverage that will easily exceed 95% in each community. It is critical that we bring this essential tool of economic growth and prosperity to Western Massachusetts.

We thank you for your attention to this proposal, and strongly encourage you to give it full consideration. If you have any questions, please contact Daniel Greene in Senator Markey's office at (202) 224-2742.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

May 24, 2019

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
United States Senate
255 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Markey:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Connect America Fund Phase II auction. Closing the digital divide is my top priority. That's why the FCC held our nation's first reverse auction of fixed broadband support, allocating \$1.488 billion to expand high-speed broadband to more than 700,000 unserved rural homes and small businesses over the next 10 years. Moreover, this deployment is costing taxpayers much less than initially projected because the Commission allocated funding through competitive bidding.

Westfield Gas and Electric won more than \$10 million in funding in the auction and promises to bring high-speed broadband to unserved areas. I know the importance of this funding to Western Massachusetts, as I visited Westfield last September and heard for myself what this funding could do. Commission staff are actively reviewing Westfield Gas and Electric's long-form application, and I am hopeful they will resolve any pending issues in the near term.

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ajit V. Pai".

Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

May 24, 2019

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
United States Senate
317 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Warren:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Connect America Fund Phase II auction. Closing the digital divide is my top priority. That's why the FCC held our nation's first reverse auction of fixed broadband support, allocating \$1.488 billion to expand high-speed broadband to more than 700,000 unserved rural homes and small businesses over the next 10 years. Moreover, this deployment is costing taxpayers much less than initially projected because the Commission allocated funding through competitive bidding.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. Below the signature, the name "Ajit V. Pai" is printed in a standard sans-serif font.

Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

May 24, 2019

The Honorable Jim McGovern
U.S. House of Representatives
408 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman McGovern:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Connect America Fund Phase II auction. Closing the digital divide is my top priority. That's why the FCC held our nation's first reverse auction of fixed broadband support, allocating \$1.488 billion to expand high-speed broadband to more than 700,000 unserved rural homes and small businesses over the next 10 years. Moreover, this deployment is costing taxpayers much less than initially projected because the Commission allocated funding through competitive bidding.

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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

May 24, 2019

The Honorable Richard E. Neal
U.S. House of Representatives
2309 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Neal:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Connect America Fund Phase II auction. Closing the digital divide is my top priority. That's why the FCC held our nation's first reverse auction of fixed broadband support, allocating \$1.488 billion to expand high-speed broadband to more than 700,000 unserved rural homes and small businesses over the next 10 years. Moreover, this deployment is costing taxpayers much less than initially projected because the Commission allocated funding through competitive bidding.

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Ajit V. Pai