



MONTANA
TELECOMMUNICATIONS
ASSOCIATION

June 7, 2019

Ms. Marlene Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., SW
Washington, DC. 20554

RE:

- WC Docket No. 10-90. Connect America Fund
- WT Docket No. 10-208. Mobility Fund
- WC Docket No. 19-126. Broadband Digital Opportunity Fund
- WC Docket No. 02-60. Rural Health Care Fund
- WC Docket No. 18-89. Protecting against National Security Threats to the Communications Supply Chain through FCC Programs.

Dear Ms. Dortch,

Commissioner Brendan Carr and his chief of staff, Jamie Susskind, visited Montana on May 28-31, 2019, during which time the undersigned and several members of the Montana Telecommunications Association had the opportunity to meet with them and discuss the above-captioned items. MTA members meeting with Cmr. Carr and Ms. Susskind included Jason Williams, CEO of Blackfoot, who met with Cmr. Carr and Ms. Susskind in Missoula, MT; Craig Gates, CEO of Triangle Communications, who met the Commissioner in Utica, MT; Mike Kilgore, CEO of Nemont, who met the Commissioner in Belfry, MT; and Rob Johnstone, CEO of Range, who met with the Commissioner in Forsyth, MT.

Connect America Fund (CAF)

MTA members emphasized the importance of maintaining CAF high cost support for continued investment in broadband deployment. Visits in Utica, Belfry and Forsyth specifically highlighted the remoteness of Montana's service areas and emphasized the need for and cost of rural broadband deployment. Mr. Williams also demonstrated its wireless distribution facilities in Missoula, illustrating the need for both wired fiber) and wireless broadband deployment options.

Marlene Dortch, Secretary
Notice of ex parte communication
June 7, 2010

Mobility Fund (MF)

MTA demonstrated the important link between Mobility Fund support and smart ag. Mr. Kilgore showed where MF support provided wireless coverage in Belfry where no other carriers are present, and discussed how his network benefits farms, ranches and travelers in Northeastern Montana.

Broadband Digital Opportunity Fund (BDOF)

MTA pointed out that while rural broadband providers like those represented by MTA are investing universal service support in rural areas and serving their customers with the most advanced telecommunications services they can afford to provide—with the help of high cost universal service funding—there are many communities and thousands of Montanans who lack access to adequate broadband service. The BDOF should be designed to facilitate investment not only to complete the job of broadband deployment in rural areas served by MTA member companies, but also in those areas that have been neglected by their service providers. While reverse auctions are efficient, they may not always be adequate to address such needs.

Rural Health Care Fund. (RHC)

MTA accompanied Cmr. Carr and Ms. Susskind on visits to telemedicine facilities in Missoula and in Forsyth, where the Commissioner was able to witness “both ends” of a telemedicine functionality—from an urban institution in Missoula to a rural setting in Forsyth. Blackfoot also accompanied the Commissioner on a visit to Blackfoot’s C2M tech development facility where a start-up company is developing a remote telemed monitoring application for patients.

Threats to the Communications Supply Chain

Mr. Kilgore explained the various technologies that Nemont’s wireless subsidiary, Sagebrush Cellular, deploys and the complexities involved with maintaining service for the communities Sagebrush serves if Sagebrush were required to “rip and replace” its Huawei equipment.

Respectfully submitted,

_____/s/
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