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VIA ECFS

EX PARTE

June 29, 2018

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

Re: *Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90; *Petition of USTelecom for Forbearance Pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 160(c) to Accelerate Investment in Broadband and Next-Generation Networks*, WC Docket No. 18-141

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On June 27, 2018, Tony Thomas, President and Chief Executive Officer of Windstream Services, LLC (“Windstream”), and the undersigned, met with Commission Chairman Ajit Pai and Jay Schwarz, Chairman Pai’s Wireline Advisor, to discuss broadband deployment issues and USTelecom’s forbearance petition in the above-referenced proceedings.

During the meeting, Windstream emphasized that it was fully committed to helping close the digital divide and supported initiatives, such as the Connect America Fund, that helped to establish a business case for rural broadband expansion and improvement. Windstream noted, however, that overbuilding of current network infrastructure was a risk and that steps should be taken to ensure that all funds, including those disbursed by other federal entities, are used to efficiently deliver broadband to unserved and underserved populations in rural America.

In addition, Windstream raised USTelecom’s recent ex parte outlining a modified transition proposal for unbundled network elements.¹ Windstream expressed its view that the proposal represented a reasonable compromise between parties with competing interests and that the transition period specified therein reflected the minimum amount of time necessary.

Please contact me if you require additional information.

¹ See USTelecom Ex Parte, WC Docket No. 18-141 (filed June 21, 2018).

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Sincerely,

/s/ Thomas Whitehead

Thomas Whitehead

cc: Chairman Ajit Pai
Jay Schwarz