



# Roane County Commission

200 Main Street  
Spencer, WV 25276  
304 927-0078

[www.roanewv.com](http://www.roanewv.com)



*Melissa O'Brien, President*  
*Merlin Shamblin*      *Randy Whited*

July 13, 2017

Federal Communications Commission  
Mignon Clyburn, Commissioner  
445 12th Street SW,  
Washington, DC 20554

Honorable Commissioner Clyburn:

Thank you for your commitment to protecting consumers and ensuring the reliability and resiliency of public safety communications. The Roane County Commission agrees with your belief in the power of broadband to tackle some of our nation's greatest challenges, including challenges here in our little corner of the nation, Roane County, West Virginia.

As of this year, each student in the county in 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade will be assigned a laptop that they can bring home. However, approximately 80% of our rural citizens (out of 8,400) do not have access to broadband at home. In these technological times, access to high-speed internet needs to be as much a part of a community's infrastructure as passable roads, clean water and adequate electric services. Commercial providers are content to reach highly populated areas and often utilize a "bait and switch" system for attracting consumers such as offering "up to" x Mbps and only delivering a fraction of x. Current broadband services outside of heavily populated areas quickly deteriorates or is nonexistent. This is a serious deterrent to opportunities in education, development and business growth, and will only get worse as our population continues to decline.

Recently our state legislature passed a bill allowing under-served communities to form co-operatives in order to expand broadband, which is a beginning, but without start-up funding, most communities lack the resources to get these types of complex systems underway.

Not only is our rural broadband coverage lacking/nonexistent, we are plagued with dead zones for cell service and problems in many areas with land-line service. We have an entire district (Geary) that cannot dial 911 during heavy storms due to issues with Frontier landlines. See attached quotes from some of our residents. These concerns and the lack of cell coverage county-wide have been expressed to the few vendors who service our citizens, with nearly zero effects.

Regards,

Melissa O'Brien, President  
Roane County Commission

Quotes/complaints from some residents:

My Frontier lines crackle & buzz, regularly fails line tests (water fault), often too noisy to talk, dialup speed is 24kbps (3kB/s) & cuts out regularly, Frontier won't fix it. No DSL service, no cellular service in my hollow, satellite is too high latency for my tech work. — [REDACTED] Tech, Looneyville, WV

"Well, my phone worked for two calls then went on the Frontier fritz again. This time the estimated repair is 7/17. This is my 3rd repair ticket in a week." [REDACTED] River Rd., Walton, WV

[REDACTED] lives off Rt. 14 right in Spencer, WV. She goes weeks without her landline and her Frontier DSL is so unreliable that she is considering going to Satellite internet.

We have an area near Reedy, WV (Cains Run) whose residents regularly experience land-line outages virtually every time it rains (Frontier).

In the area from the high school, up to 5 miles out Lick Fork, landline service is compromised every time there is moisture in the air, and there is unreliable or no cell signal. Satellite internet is not adequate to support those who need to work from home, and is too expensive for many of our residents. [REDACTED] Lick Fork Rd., Spencer, WV