



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

August 16, 2019

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communication Commission
455 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

RE: WC Docket 06-122

Dear Ms. Dortch:

I am writing to voice support for the comments of both the State E-Rate coordinators Alliance (SECA) and the State Education Technology Directors Association (SETDA) in their opposition to proposed changes to the Universal Service Fund program caps. As both SECA and SETDA note in their opposition comments, the changes are unnecessary and would negatively impact the effectiveness of both the Rural Healthcare and E-Rate programs, respectively.

As stated by SECA and SETDA, Rural Healthcare and E-Rate are separate programs targeting different outcomes. To combine and perhaps lower the overall funding cap for the two programs can only serve to harm the communities that these programs were created to aid. In our state, the Michigan Department of Education has leveraged allocated state funding into the creation of the E-Rate Enhancement Special Construction Matching Fund. In the first grant cycle, conditional grant awards totaled nearly \$646,000. Any reduction in the available E-Rate program budget could harm not only applicants seeking to improve their broadband connections to better serve students and communities, but also eligible entities looking for service discounts on recurring E-Rate eligible expenses.

The state grant program targets the unserved and underserved E-Rate eligible entities in our state. The proposed merger and possible funding cap reduction could reduce awards to all Michigan applicants and would negatively impact this fledgling grant program.

Sincerely,

Venessa A. Keesler, Ph.D.
Deputy Superintendent

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