



August 24, 2018

To:

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
445 12th Street, SW, Room TW-B204
Washington, DC 20554

From:

Val R. Panteah, Sr., Governor
Pueblo of Zuni
P. O. Box 339
Zuni, NM 87327

Re:

Comments regarding FCC Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (18-120)

Dear Secretary Dortch:

The Pueblo of Zuni appreciates the opportunity to provide comment on proposed rulemaking that would make portions of the 2.5GHz band (2496-2690MHz) available to Native Nations in rural areas of the United States. The Pueblo of Zuni is a federally recognized Indian tribe and partners with a number of Internet providers to provide high speed internet to our reservation. Unfortunately, the costs of excellent connectivity and service becomes problematic due to the remoteness of locations and the use of costly technology and infrastructure that does not effectively cover remote areas such as the Zuni Indian Reservation. The result has been intermittent service, lack of access for our population to high speed internet as well as the fact that dead spots interfere with emergency medical and law enforcement personnel and communications. We have experienced many situations where EMS/EMT personnel are unable to download forms, vital health information and instructions during the course of their emergency response. While we have fiber and modern computer equipment available in the community, educational institutions and schools, the signal is either too weak or unavailable in home locations. Thus rendering modern equipment unavailable for use. The public school systems in New Mexico are increasing going to digital documentation, training and testing. Our school are often plagued by loss of signal or data is lost or interrupted to the point of frustration.

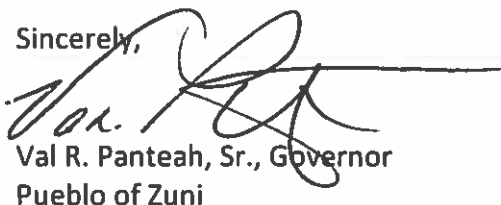
Our reservation environment is virtually held captive to the technology and costs of large telecom providers that charge a high cost for basic services. Yet the accessible band width and speed does not relate to the cost we pay for such service. In order to remedy this situation, the Pueblo of Zuni has entered into a strategic partnership with Mural Net to assist the tribe to close the "homework" gap as well as bring a higher efficiency to services installed and provided by large telecom providers serving our location.

The Pueblo of Zuni is pleased that the NPRM is providing consideration to grant current license holders, local tribes and local educational institutions priority for claiming unlicensed 2.5 GHz spectrum and then auctioning off the remaining spectrum rights. If such priority is not granted, then tribe and educational institutions in rural, remote areas will not be able to compete with the large telecoms and services will continue to be slow or inaccessible. These companies will not consider enhancing their initial investments due to the high cost of doing business in such environments. Expanding access to the 2.5GHz band will enable the Pueblo of Zuni to fulfill its trust responsibility to the Zuni people and support a host of other developments such as educational services, access to high speed internet to students, teachers and parents as well as enable economic development opportunities and create safer conditions for law enforcement and first responders. We provide the following recommendations for your consideration:

1. Native nations should be granted a local first priority filing window to obtain spectrum before other entities, including current licensees seeking to expand.
2. Reservation boundaries should be used to demark geographic service areas rather than using census data or the county.
3. Native nations should be given the option of acquiring all available channels in the 2.5 Hz band on their respective reservation lands.
4. If 50% of a tribal community cannot be served by existing licensees or the 2.5GHz is not in use, then tribes should be provided the option to build and maintain their own networks.
5. The educational focus of the EBS spectrum should be preserved and should focus on connecting the most in need and disadvantaged students of any age.
6. We recommend a 90 day notice before any priority filing window is introduced and a 60 day period within which to file for unused spectrum.

I thank the Commission for the opportunity to file these comments and urge the FCC to consider the importance of internet-equity for Native nations as it makes unused portions of the 2.5GHz spectrum band available.

Sincerely,



Val R. Panteah, Sr., Governor
Pueblo of Zuni