



August 30, 2018

The Honorable Ajit Pai  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

Thank you again for your commitment to the E-rate program. Your leadership is crucial to continuing to make the program more effective and efficient for the millions of students in America who rely on it.

Unfortunately, the FCC's own September 1 deadline to issue funding decisions has arrived and **zero of the 347 special construction projects submitted by schools in 2018 have received funding decisions**. Last year's delays and denials issue has not been addressed. Nearly half a billion dollars in school broadband infrastructure will be stalled once again because of unnecessary red tape – leaving hundreds of thousands of students behind.

Here's what is at risk:

- **Rural students are disproportionately left behind.** 70% of these fiber projects support rural schools.
- **Schools will end up paying more for less.** All of these projects were competitively bid, and the proposed construction was the most cost-effective option to get these schools the broadband they need for equal access to educational choice and opportunity
- **Obsolete services are receiving preferential treatment, sending the wrong message.** Instead of funding these vital fiber projects, the FCC has funded \$17.4 million for voice telephone lines, which can only access the Internet at dial-up speeds and are completely inadequate for classroom learning opportunities.

I know that you believe the E-rate program is worth fighting for; you said as much in your letter to the USAC Administrator on April 18, 2018. Now more than ever, we need you to fight for these kids too. The FCC Wireline Competition Bureau and Universal Service Administrative Company have taken steps to address some issues, but they have not delivered on your directive to speed up the processing of these critical applications. America's students need your leadership to get these projects approved as soon as possible.

As always, my team and I at EducationSuperHighway stand ready to support you in solving this critical problem. We appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Evan Marwell*

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