



## ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION

Brien J. Sheahan  
Chairman and CEO

August 30, 2018

IN THE MATTER OF APPLICATIONS OF T-MOBILE US, INC., AND SPRINT  
CORPORATION FOR CONSENT TO TRANSFER CONTROL OF LICENSES AND  
AUTHORIZATIONS; WT DOCKET NO. 18-197

Chairman Ajit Pai  
Federal Communications Commission  
Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Commissioner Michael O’Rielly  
Federal Communications  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Commissioner Brendan Carr  
Federal Communications Commission  
Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel  
Federal Communications  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai, and Commissioners O’Rielly, Carr, and Rosenworcel:

On June 18, 2018 T-Mobile and Sprint applied for approval of a merger of the two companies. I write to encourage your approval of the transaction which I believe will benefit consumers in a variety of ways including acceleration of the build out of 5G service in both urban and—importantly—in rural areas of Illinois.

As the Illinois Commerce Commission recently expressed to your agency, deployment of broadband cellular services in rural Illinois has lagged. The merged company expects to spend almost \$40 billion to deliver and accelerate the deployment of

the first nationwide 5G network, and anything that will help underserved customers enjoy the benefits of these critical technologies is worthy of support.

New investments in a nationwide broadband network will also unlock the value of the 5G economy. In the same way that 4G LTE provided the speed and capacity to enable a revolution in mobile applications, 5G is poised to usher in a new and even more profound wave of innovation and technology that will transform the way Americans live, work, learn, and travel—especially in rural areas where these investments have been slower to take root.

Today, according to the FCC's own calculations, millions of rural citizens lack access to broadband internet. An additional competitor in rural areas with scale and critical mass, such as the proposed merged company, will give these underserved communities a more robust marketplace and it will have the potential to bring additional mobile and fixed wireless broadband options to these residents.

Combining each company's complementary resources and spectrum will also lead to benefits for consumers through improved 4G LTE coverage, and long-term benefits for all wireless customers through improved coverage, capacity, and ability to compete in a highly capital-intensive industry—benefits that would not be likely without the merger.

With the prospect of a wireless network hundreds of times faster than the current cellular network, the next generation of wireless network technology will have a meaningful impact on our nation's economy, competitiveness, and standard of living. With greater bandwidth, faster speeds, and reduced latency, 5G networks will allow doctors to perform operations from remote locations, allow automobiles to communicate nearly continuously with other automobiles, street lamps, gas stations, and other transportation infrastructure, while also unlocking the potential for drones to send real-time, high-resolution video from otherwise inaccessible or hard to reach locations.

5G technology will provide a network capable of supporting 4k and 8k video streaming, virtual and augmented reality, and the evolution of the internet of things in lighting, appliances, the electric grid, and throughout the rest of the economy. 5G offers the prospect of tremendous increases in productivity by allowing businesses to work more quickly and efficiently and it will eliminate the latency, interruption, and other issues that have hampered the ability for employees to work remotely. The prospects for improvements in business, robotics, education, medicine, energy, and other services stand to increase the health, welfare, and safety of Illinois citizens and citizens everywhere.

With potential speeds that are 10 times faster than current wired broadband networks, 5G networks will offer customers the opportunity to cut the broadband cord just as they have cut their telephone cords. The acceleration of the 5G buildout by T-Mobile and Sprint will force other carriers to similarly deploy 5G technology as well as

high-speed, high-capacity fiber networks, which will have positives effect for consumers through reduced cost and increased availability.

I appreciate the important role that the Federal Communications Commission plays in ensuring that mergers in this industry are in the public interest. I strongly believe that the merger of T-Mobile and Sprint is in the public interest because it will accelerate the development of the next generation of wireless technology by creating the first nationwide 5G network and by creating pressure on the industry to follow suit.

I agree with those who believe that the buildout of robust 5G networks will rival intercontinental railroads and the interstate highway system in terms of bringing extraordinary benefits to consumers across the country and that we should encourage policies that foster an environment where these investments are made.

I respectfully urge the Commission to approve the transaction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brien Sheahan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "B".

Brien J. Sheahan  
Chairman and CEO  
Illinois Commerce Commission