

Yellowstone County



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September 21, 2018

Commissioner Brendan Carr
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Accelerating Wireless Broadband Deployment by Removing Barriers to Infrastructure Investment, WT Docket No. 17-79; Streamlining Deployment of Small Cell Infrastructure by Improving Wireless Siting Policies, WT Docket No. 16-421

Dear Commissioner Carr:

As County Commissioners in Yellowstone County, Montana, we urge the Commission to continue its efforts to reduce regulatory barriers and streamline the deployment of wireless infrastructure. We commend the Commission on its actions to date and believe that further elimination of barriers will bring Americans tremendous opportunity.

Yellowstone County is located in south-central Montana. Although it is the most populous county in the State of Montana, with almost 150,000 residents, we have many smaller communities as well. Those small communities, such as Ballantine, Huntley, and Shepherd, with populations of less than 500, will benefit just as much, if not more, than some of our larger communities like Billings. In Ballantine, farms and ranches will significantly benefit from the smart agriculture and telemedicine opportunities broadband offers. In other communities, such as Laurel, which is home to the Cenex Harvest States oil refinery and the largest rail yard between Washington and Minnesota, next generation connectivity will provide the opportunity to transform these key industries, allowing for more efficient use of resources, while reinvigorating the economy. In Billings, broadband and 5G can offer smart city management options, improving the efficiency of operations, reducing traffic or congestion, and reducing energy and water consumption.

Despite the many benefits broadband brings to Yellowstone County, lengthy approval processes, high costs, and unreasonable restrictions in rural and urban areas can impede further connectivity in our communities. Reducing these regulatory barriers by setting guidelines on fees, siting requirements and review timeframes, will promote investment including rural areas like ours.

Reducing regulatory barriers will decrease the cost of deployment in rural areas and will thus make investment in those areas more economically viable. At the same time, decreasing the cost

of deployment in urban areas will free up providers' limited capital, making it available for rural areas.

Places like Yellowstone County have the potential to be transformed by broadband connectivity and next-generation wireless services. We urge the Commission to continue its efforts to reduce regulatory barriers and we look forward to working with you to ensure connectivity across America.

Respectfully submitted,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY, MONTANA

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John Ostlund". The script is fluid and cursive.

John Ostlund, Chair
District No. 1

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Denis Pitman". The script is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Denis Pitman, Member
District No. 2

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robyn Driscoll". The script is cursive and clear.

Robyn Driscoll, Member
District No. 3

BOCC/ptb