



November 14, 2017

**Ex Parte**

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: *Connect America Fund* (WC Docket No. 10-90)

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On November 13, 2017, Lynn Follansbee and Jonathan Banks of USTelecom met with Jamie Susskind, Legal Advisor and Jeffery Westling, Legal Fellow of Commissioner Brendan Carr's office to discuss the Universal Service Fund High Cost budget. We expressed support for both long-term and short-term solutions to ensure sufficiency within the High Cost fund to support the shortfalls in funding for rural areas.

We discussed how the insufficiency of funding has effected broadband providers ability to build out fiber to rural areas and how all of the reforms with the Connect America Fund in the last several years have been a positive step toward connecting rural America, except that the lack of funding has had a significant impact on the effectiveness of the programs.

We also discussed data showing the decline in capital investment in broadband over the last two years.

Please contact the undersigned should you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

USTELECOM ASSOCIATION

By: \_\_\_\_\_

B. Lynn Follansbee  
Vice President – Law & Policy  
601 New Jersey Avenue NW, Suite 600  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
(202) 326-7300

cc: Jamie Susskind