



November 15, 2017

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

**RE:** Notice of Written Ex Parte  
WC Docket Nos. 10-90, 14-58, 14-259

Dear Secretary Dortch:

This letter is to support the petition by the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) and Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development to keep nearly \$140 million in Connect America Funds in Pennsylvania to increase access to high speed internet service in underserved areas of the Commonwealth.

Adequate infrastructure is critical to the health and growth of communities. In addition to good roads, water, and electricity, reliable telecommunications are essential for resident safety, education, and business operations. Unfortunately, high speed internet is either limited or nonexistent in significant portions of Montour and Columbia (PA) counties and the surrounding region.

We understand that from a regulatory standpoint, only public utilities are required to provide a basic level of service. However, today's telecommunications marketplace offers other potential partners that are willing to extend service where economically viable. Funding policies should be updated to provide incentives and assistance to these companies that are currently only available to the regulated utilities.

The Connect America Funds allocated to Pennsylvania are very much needed in Pennsylvania. The PUC is interested in exploring alternatives to strengthen underserved rural areas. We ask the FCC to keep the allocated funds in Pennsylvania to provide opportunities for growth.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Fred Gaffney  
President