

December 1, 2017

Ms. Marlene Dortch  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

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

Dear Ms. Dortch:

The signatories to this letter are Alabama rural telecommunications carriers that are participating in the Federal Communications Commission's ("Commission's") Alternative Connect America Model ("A-CAM") support plan. We are writing to urge the Commission to authorize additional A-CAM funding up to \$200/month per eligible customer location before the end of this year. Doing so would assist greatly in our efforts to close the digital divide in Alabama.

The six companies in Alabama that elected A-CAM support committed to deploy broadband to a specific number of additional locations if further funding were made available by December 31, 2017. We are ready, willing and able to meet those additional broadband deployment obligations. Collectively, additional funding of \$200/month per location would result in a nearly 6% increase in the minimum number of rural consumers guaranteed 25/3 Mbps broadband service and an over 6% increase in the minimum number of rural consumers guaranteed service of at least 10/1 Mbps. The number of A-CAM funded locations that would remain on "reasonable request" in Alabama would decrease by 76% if funding is increased to this level, i.e. the carriers serving those customers would have a concrete obligation to deploy broadband to them.

Allocating additional funding to further extend broadband in the rural Alabama communities we serve would have far reaching economic and social benefits. By way of illustration, Betty Brackin, Federal Programs/Curriculum Assessment Coordinator for Washington County Alabama, states:

We no longer have any printed books for science, only Ebooks. We plan to purchase Ebooks for all subjects as their adoption year arrives. However, we are concerned about our students not having Internet at home and are already experiencing issues with that. We have moved to a "standards based teaching and learning approach" which means we don't have to have a book but use other resources (most being online) to advance learning. 100% of students in grades 3-13 have their own school district issued device. They MUST have Internet at home but many don't currently have it. We have added this to our needs assessment in our District Technology Plan.

Ms. Marlene Dortch  
December 1, 2017  
Page 2

The time for the Commission to act is now. The mechanism to distribute additional funds to advance broadband deployment is already in place. We are already upgrading network infrastructure in our communities and are eager to further extend the reach of those networks to additional customers. If we receive additional funding now, we will be able to design our networks in the most efficient manner to better serve our communities.

We urge the Commission to act by the end of this year to allocate additional funding to carry out its original decision to provide A-CAM funding for up to \$200/month per eligible location.

Sincerely,

Annice Jordan  
Vice President & Director of Finance  
Millry Communications

Butler Telephone Company  
Millry Telephone Company  
National Telephone Company

Oakman Telephone Company  
Peoples Telephone Company  
Roanoke Telephone Company

cc: Chairman Ajit Pai  
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn  
Commissioner Michael O'Rielly  
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel  
Commissioner Brendan Carr