

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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October 24, 2018

The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

We are writing to request that the Commission provide staff of the House Energy & Commerce Committee with a briefing on the pending USTelecom forbearance proceeding and a historical perspective on the FCC's use of the forbearance process as authorized under the Telecommunications Act of 1996 ("the 1996 Act"). We are also requesting a presentation on the Connect American Fund ("CAF") Phase II auction results, as recently shared at the September 26th Commission open meeting.

As you are well aware, the bipartisan intent of the 1996 Act was to ensure robust, facilities-based competition throughout the United States. It is well documented in proceedings before the Commission, as well as testimony before this Committee, that the provision of broadband service in certain geographic areas of the country can be cost-prohibitive. Given the transformation of this sector over the last twenty years, we will be interested to learn more from the Commission on how inflation, cost of capital, replacement and repair expenses, available technologies, and other inputs have changed and how those changes will alter the cost structure of future networks. We would also be interested to learn how the Unbundled Network Elements (UNE) regime has worked in the marketplace since the FCC's implementation of this Act. On the topic of improving connectivity for all Americans, it would also be helpful to this committee to review the results of recently concluded CAF Phase II auction. As rural consumers and small businesses are most often left behind as investment focuses on larger markets and clients, we are anxious to see that the combined effect of the policies we have been working on

over the past year to lessen tax burdens, free up capital and spur investment can be leveraged with the scare dollars available from the Universal Service Fund.

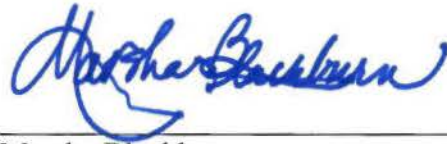
This Commission has demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting broadband deployment and has taken bold steps to facilitate innovation and investment in all parts of the network. We appreciate your attention to the efforts initiated under the 1996 Act to bring facilities-based competition, as the authors of that act intended.

Please make arrangements to schedule this briefing no later than November 1, 2018. Your assistance is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact Robin Colwell or Tim Kurth of the Committee Staff at 202-225-2927. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Greg Walden", written over a horizontal line.

Greg Walden
Chairman

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Marsha Blackburn", written over a horizontal line.

Marsha Blackburn
Chairman
Subcommittee on Communications
and Technology