DEB FISCHER
NEBRASKA

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ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
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SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 9, 2014

The Honorable Tom Wheeler
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

1086

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

I write regarding today's rapidly evolving video marketplace, specifically the challenges and opportunities it presents for many independent programmers and rural television viewers. As the Commission reviews video market competition and proposed industry consolidation, it should ensure that the public interest benefits resulting from a dynamic video market are maintained for citizens living in rural areas. The pending mergers before the Commission offer an opportunity to advance innovation, competition, and access to important content for *all* Americans.

As you know, America's farmers and ranchers rely on rural-focused programming to receive important information that helps them remain competitive in the global agricultural economy. Additionally, many hard-working American families want the voice of their rural communities represented as an option on their programming lineup. When multichannel video programming distributors grow, consumers in both rural and urban parts of the country should benefit from economies of scale. Those benefits should extend beyond next-generation products and platforms. They should also include meeting consumer demand for content that reflects uniquely rural interests.

It is important that our nation's video market continues to improve access to programming. I ask that the Commission, when using its public interest standard, properly account for the importance of rural citizens and consider the effects of consolidation on independent programmers and their viewers.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Deb Fischer

Deb Fischer
United States Senator

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

November 4, 2014

The Honorable Deb Fischer
United States Senate
383 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Fischer:

Thank you for your letter expressing support for improved access to video programming, including programming specific to rural communities, and how it relates to the pending merger reviews at the Commission. I appreciate hearing your views.

As you note, the Commission currently is reviewing proposed transactions between Comcast and Time Warner Cable, as well as AT&T and DirecTV. Within these pending transactions, programming issues – including program carriage – are one of the many issues raised by commenters. With regard to your specific concern about rural-focused programming, I can confirm that these issues have been highlighted in both proceedings by RFD-TV, a cable and satellite television network headquartered in your state, along with many of its viewers.

Please be assured that the views of RFD-TV and its viewers will be given careful consideration as the staff reviews the record in the proceedings. Additionally, your letter will be made a part of the record in both of the proceedings.

Sincerely,

Tom Wheeler