

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

November 19, 2014

1209

The Honorable Tom Wheeler  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 Twelfth Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

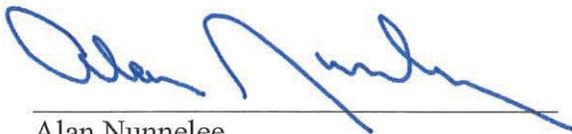
Dear Chairman Wheeler:

As Members of Congress who represent Mississippi, we urge the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to ensure that the final rules for Phase II of the Mobility Fund provide sufficient support for building and maintaining advanced wireless services in rural areas. In establishing the Universal Service Fund, Congress directed the FCC to support comparable services in rural areas as those provided in urban areas. As you recently noted, the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a wireless century. We urge you to adopt MF II rules that adequately support wireless so that rural states like Mississippi are not left behind.

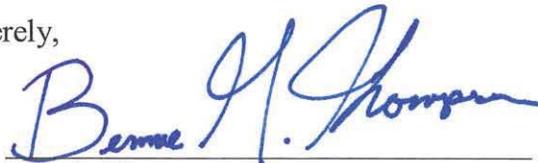
We represent one of the highest wireless-only populations, with approximately 50% of Mississippians living in wireless-only households. As consumer demand for wireless services continues to grow, adequate resources for mobile broadband through MF II will keep our constituents connected. Full support for deploying and maintaining mobile broadband networks will also support economic growth, as rural states stand to benefit from innovations in precision farming and agriculture techniques. New technologies enabled by mobile broadband reduce costs, increase yields, and improve quality of life, and potential advances are limited only by the strength of the mobile broadband signal.

The benefits of appropriately funding wireless services through MF II also extend to public safety, education, and telemedicine. For example, the Diabetes Telehealth Network, a public-private partnership launched earlier this year, has the potential to be what Governor Phil Bryant has called “a new lifeline for health and disease management.” Broadband connectivity, supported through the FCC’s previous reforms to the USF program, is fundamental to expanding such programs, and MF II provides the opportunity to bring and maintain mobile broadband throughout rural America. We applaud your focus on modernizing the Universal Service Fund, and support efforts to expand and maintain mobile broadband connectivity.

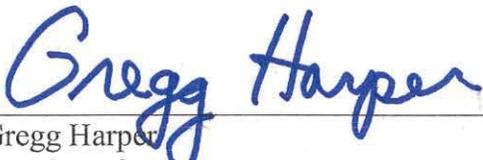
Sincerely,



Alan Nunnelee  
Member of Congress



Bennie Thompson  
Member of Congress



Gregg Harper  
Member of Congress



Steven Palazzo  
Member of Congress



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

January 20, 2015

The Honorable Gregg Harper  
U.S. House of Representatives  
307 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Harper:

Thank you for your letter expressing interest in how best to update our Universal Service Fund (USF) policies to reflect current consumer mobility demand and need. You noted that advanced wireless services are particularly important in rural and high-cost areas, as represented throughout much of Mississippi. Your views are very important, and they will both be included in the record of the proceeding and be considered as part of the Commission's review.

The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses in rural America have similar opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the United States of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the 2011 *USF/ICC Transformation Order*, the Commission took significant strides to update the universal service program to reflect the realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In particular, the Commission adopted specific performance goals to preserve and advance the universal availability of voice service and to ensure the universal availability of modern networks capable of providing advanced mobile voice and broadband services.

A core component of the Commission's 2011 USF reforms was the creation of the Connect America Fund to preserve and advance voice and robust broadband services, both fixed and mobile, in high-cost areas of the nation that the marketplace would otherwise not serve. The Commission's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau completed the auction for Mobility Fund Phase I on September 27, 2012, with 33 winning bidders eligible to receive a total of up to \$299,998,632 in one-time support to provide 3G or better mobile voice and broadband services, with disbursements beginning in April 2013 and anticipated to continue through 2016 as carriers complete their deployments. In Mississippi, there were two winning bids by Powertel/Memphis, Inc., a subsidiary of T-Mobile, for support up to \$1,829,212, and its support was authorized in June 2013. Powertel is constructing facilities for 3G service and has until June 2015 to complete the project. Powertel reported in its annual report that all network design and leases have been completed and the deployment is in progress.

Last April, the Commission adopted a *Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM)* to seek comments on proposals to target funds to support mobile services in a Mobility Fund Phase II. In the *FNPRM*, we reaffirmed our commitment to preserving and advancing mobile voice and broadband services in high-cost areas. In light of marketplace developments in the

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Our goal is consistent with yours: how best to use the limited funds available to us to ensure that rural Americans can take advantage of the opportunities presented by a “mobile society.” I also welcome a dialogue with stakeholders about how best to accomplish our shared objectives, and I look forward to working with you as we continue reforming and modernizing the USF high-cost program to ensure that all Americans have access to robust voice and broadband services. I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

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

Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

January 20, 2015

The Honorable Alan Nunnelee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1427 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Nunnelee:

Thank you for your letter expressing interest in how best to update our Universal Service Fund (USF) policies to reflect current consumer mobility demand and need. You noted that advanced wireless services are particularly important in rural and high-cost areas, as represented throughout much of Mississippi. Your views are very important, and they will both be included in the record of the proceeding and be considered as part of the Commission's review.

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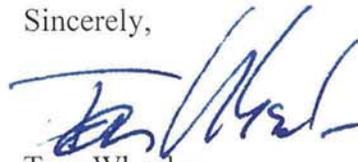
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Sincerely,



Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

January 20, 2015

The Honorable Steven M. Palazzo  
U.S. House of Representatives  
331 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Palazzo:

Thank you for your letter expressing interest in how best to update our Universal Service Fund (USF) policies to reflect current consumer mobility demand and need. You noted that advanced wireless services are particularly important in rural and high-cost areas, as represented throughout much of Mississippi. Your views are very important, and they will both be included in the record of the proceeding and be considered as part of the Commission's review.

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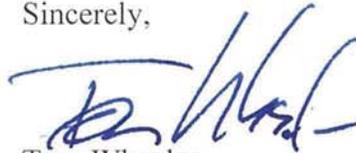
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Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

January 20, 2015

The Honorable Bennie Thompson  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2466 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Thompson:

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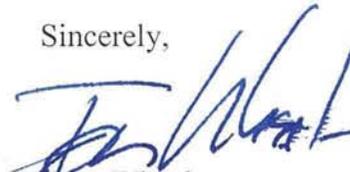
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