



BILL HASLAM
GOVERNOR
STATE OF TENNESSEE

February 6, 2015

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

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

Recently, President Obama called on the FCC to pre-empt Tennessee state law insofar as it concerns the regulation of municipally-owned internet networks. I certainly agree with the President's goal of encouraging investment in broadband, and we have done that with much success in Tennessee. However, while we agree with the goal, we strongly disagree with the approach.

Beyond the obvious constitutional questions this proposal raises, reasonable people can disagree about the best role for local government to play when it comes to broadband deployment. However, I believe those decisions are best made at the state level. State governments are in a much better position than Washington to weigh the potential costs and benefits.

When I first ran for Governor, one of the guiding principles I adopted was always to start with the question, "Should government even be doing this?" When it comes time to paying for government services, the buck stops here, not in Washington.

As the National Governors Association recently pointed out to the FCC, "States have a strong interest in overseeing the process by which municipal broadband networks are designed and approved because states maintain ultimate responsibility for the financial health of the cities and towns within their borders." I agree with their assessment and therefore disagree with the President's approach.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Haslam".

Bill Haslam
Governor