

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 9, 2014

COMMITTEES:  
ARMED SERVICES  
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND  
TRANSPORTATION  
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC  
WORKS  
INDIAN AFFAIRS  
SMALL BUSINESS AND  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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

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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  
United States Senator