

# *The 60 Plus Association*

515 King Street • Suite 315 • Alexandria, VA 22314  
Phone 703.807.2070 • Fax 703.807.2073 • www.60Plus.org

**Kill the Death Tax. Protect Social Security. Energy Security.**

*James L. Martin*  
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*Amy N. Frederick*  
President

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Honorary Chairman

*Pat Boone*  
National Spokesman

March 9, 2015

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of: Technology Transitions  
GN Docket No. 13-5

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

As we continue to explore the multitude of benefits that will come from transitioning our nation's antiquated copper networks to fiber technology, we must force ourselves to ask one very important question: how will this shift affect senior citizens and others who want to make sure they can keep the services upon which they have come to rely?

As it turns out, moving our network to fiber will be so painless that nearly all of these services will be unaffected by the shift, at least in terms of how they are accessed or utilized. For example, dialing "911" to access emergency services will work the same way as it always has. The same can be said for voicemail, collect calling, and even relay services, which are used by individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Here at 60Plus, we are dedicated to ensuring that America's seniors are provided with the best technology available for accessing all of the services on which they depend, particularly those used for keeping in touch with family and friends, and contacting whoever is needed in times of emergency. Seniors are more technologically integrated today than ever before. They log onto Facebook to socialize with friends near and far, load their Kindles with eBooks to read for their constant travels, and use Skype to see their grandchildren face-to-face when they can't visit them in person. Building a stronger network will ensure that our seniors can keep in constant contact with the ones they love.

It's clear that a fiber network is the best and most reliable medium moving forward—especially as our copper networks become increasingly outdated—and it's important that we steer our investment toward the future and away from the past. Fully investing into a fiber network will be the most cost-efficient way to give seniors access to the newest technology while effectively preserving the critical services they currently use.

Investing in fiber is without risk, but we could lose time, innovation, and money by continuing to invest in a copper network that is soon to be obsolete. Important technologies such as medical monitoring devices will flourish on fiber, and in the midst of a rapid increase in demand for telehealth services, the capabilities of these devices and the network upon which they operate will be required to expand exponentially in the near future. Being far more advanced than the copper medium, a fiber network is the only option that we can trust to support this anticipated growth in telehealth-related communications. There is little doubt that we will need to see

tremendous strides in the development of greater network capacity in order to accommodate this trend as seniors adapt to and utilize the revolutionary technologies that will be made available.

The need to update our network is immediate and undeniable. Some estimates suggest that close to 9 out of every 10 people over the age of 50 already own at least one wireless device, and the prominence of these devices within senior communities will only increase with time. It's safe to say that the utility of these machines would be enhanced by the speed and reliability of a fiber network. From the vast potential of these improvements, choosing fiber seems to be the clear and logical option moving forward.

It's also important to note that some organizations who oppose the transition to fiber are doing so in the interest of personal profit, not in the interest of promoting policies that will actually improve the lives of seniors. For example, some senior organizations such as AARP benefit greatly from promoting the sale of their branded items and services, even at the expense of compromising the needs of their members. AARP has spread several mistruths about how the transition to fiber will negatively affect seniors, disingenuously suggesting that the shift would put landline phone service at risk or dismantle the authority of Public Utility Commissioners to regulate under their authorized jurisdiction. Both of these assertions are completely unfounded, and we are certain that seniors will be better off when their services are operating on a fiber network.

Investing in a fiber network will push America forward through the 21<sup>st</sup> century. At a time when we rely so heavily on information and communications services, delaying necessary upgrades will have costly and widespread consequences. We hope that you will agree that a transition to fiber is far overdue, and will help in facilitating the necessary investment to spread fiber across the nation, for the benefit of our elderly, and all Americans.

Sincerely,



Amy Noone Frederick  
President

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*The 60 Plus Association is a 23-year-old nonpartisan organization working for death tax repeal, saving Social Security and Medicare, affordable prescription drugs, lowering energy costs and other issues featuring a limited government, less taxes approach as well as a strict adherence to the Constitution. 60 Plus calls on support from over 7 million citizen activists. 60 Plus publishes a newsletter, SENIOR VOICE, and a Scorecard, bestowing awards on lawmakers of both parties who vote "pro-senior." 60 Plus has been called "an increasingly influential senior citizen's group" and the acknowledged alternative to AARP.*