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THE TULALIP TRIBES

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The Tulalip Tribes are the successors in interest to the Snohomish, Snoqualmie, and Skykomish tribes and other tribes and band signatory to the Treaty of Point Elliott

May 20, 2015

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Committee
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Tulalip Tribes Reply Comments in Public Notice FCC 15-49 – Request for Competitive Bidding Proceeding; WT Dockets Nos. 14-170 and 05-211, GN Docket No. 12-268, and RM-11395

Dear Secretary Dortch,

On behalf of the Tulalip Tribes of Washington, please find these Reply Comments in response to Public Notice FCC 15-49.

The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) has a very in-depth understanding of the challenges tribes face in bringing telecommunications services to tribal lands; this understanding has resulted in the FCC creating programs designed to remove barriers and create opportunities for tribes to serve their own lands with tribal telecommunications providers. Unfortunately, these programs have fallen short, and we ask you to move forward and resolve tribal concerns.

It is for this reason that preserving the small business designated entity program and the tribal land bidding credit program is crucial as these programs provide tribes an opportunity to participate in future auctions. Any adverse modification of these programs will only exasperate the current challenges tribes have in gaining access to capital and credit to support infrastructure projects on tribal lands, effectively nullifying the FCC's goal to deploy telecommunication services to tribal communities.

Furthermore, we reiterate that burdensome eligibility criteria that restrict tribes from accessing funds under the "Mobility Fund and Tribal Mobility Fund" and urge the removal of such criteria. Tribal access to spectrum licenses is equally absent in Indian Country due to decades of lotteries and auctions of licenses that have benefited immensely wealthy telecommunications companies. This lack of access to spectrum has left many

smaller, yet equally able entities barred from competing for licenses due to their inability to compete with the capital reserves of wealthy companies.

Accordingly, we echo and support the comments already submitted by Doyon, Limited and Chugach Alaska Corporation, Leech Lake Telecommunications, Native Public Media, and the National Congress of American Indians.¹

Moreover, we do not agree with the comments by the NTCH, Inc., which make blatant assumptions about tribal nations, their citizens, and their financial statuses. NTCH's comments present a complete lack of understanding of Indian tribes in terms of Indian law and policy, and are permeated with inaccuracies, misperceptions, and assumptions in terms of the practical realities of tribal existence. We ask the FCC to disregard such comments.

In closing, we strongly urge the FCC to not promulgate rules that will adversely affect tribal opportunities to participate in future spectrum license auctions. Such action will only add to the existing barriers and prevent further tribal participation.

Sincerely,

Melvin R. Sheldon, Jr.
Chairman

cc: Board of Directors
Martin Napeahi, QCV GM
Salish Networks

¹ See Doyon, Limited and Chugach Alaska Corporation, Comments. May 14, 2015 Available at <http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/comment/view?id=60001031750>. Leech Lake Telecommunications, Comments. May 14, 2015. Available at <http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/comment/view?id=60001031650>. Native Public Media, Comments. May 14, 2015. Available at <http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/comment/view?id=60001031662>. National Congress of American Indians, Comments. May 14, 2015. Available at <http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/comment/view?id=60001031719>.