



# THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

301-952-3060  
**Dannielle M. Glaros**  
Council Member  
District 3

August 4, 2015

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

Re: Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization, WC Docket No. 11-42,  
Telecommunications Carriers Eligible for Universal Service Support, WC Docket  
No. 09-197, Connect America Fund, WC Docket No. 10-90

Dear Chairman Wheeler,

We write today in support of the Lifeline program, a federal plan providing access to communication that is vital for low-income residents to reach healthcare providers, employment opportunities, and most importantly, emergency services. Lifeline has been assisting Americans, and Prince George's County residents, as they strive to gain economic stability while the nation moves out of recession. As representatives of the residents of Prince George's County, we commend the work that the Federal Communications Commission has done to maintain and implement this program and all that Lifeline has done for our constituents over the last three decades.

Prince George's County has, unfortunately, been the hardest hit area for foreclosures in Maryland. Of the 30 communities that have been deemed foreclosure "hot spots" in the State, 25 of those are in Prince George's County. Our residents need services to help them save their homes, and Lifeline is one such program. However, certain proposed changes to the program could hinder much of our constituency from involvement.

We support the FCC's proposal to update Lifeline and bring it into the 21st Century. Telecommunications are constantly evolving, and such innovations should extend to every population, including that of Prince George's County. Underprivileged households must have access to communications services that are offered to all citizens in order to be competitive in the job market and work on advancing their education. Broadband is one new innovation that we hope to see expand within the Lifeline network. Yet, this service should not come at the expense of traditional phone services. The monthly allotment that is currently being used for voice services would not be sufficient to support broadband services, nor a bundle of both voice and broadband. The level of broadband qualified consumers would receive will not have a substantial impact on Lifeline adoption by low-income households. It will not be a solution any communications issues. Furthermore, customers who are utilizing Lifeline simply cannot afford to make additional payments to get the additional service. As a result, free wireless Lifeline will be adversely affected. Historically, low participation rates were the direct effect of such payment system.

The idea has been mentioned to also offer Lifeline benefits directly to customers through a voucher system. A voucher system will impede the ability for Eligible Telecommunications Carriers (ETCs) to reach qualified low-income individuals and households. Those who are eligible for Lifeline must have full access to all of its services. This proposal can also be subject to misuse by those who will see it as an opportunity to take advantage of others'

needs. Bad actors would use the voucher for an abusive purpose. Lifeline provides vital telecommunication services and it is crucial that we set adequate rules to manage the program.

The plan to have the eligibility determinations made by either a government entity separate from the FCC or a third-party private entity under contract with the government is another concern. ETS's should use personal identification requirements to prevent fraud and serve the same regulatory purpose, without adding an additional, unnecessary burden on the carrier. This could also lead to unnecessary delays in service for consumers. As an example, we have a secure form to check eligibility for Lifeline in Maryland, so there is no need to change our enrollment processes and add obstacles for the neediest residents of the state.

We thank you for your consideration of our comments as you look to modernize the Lifeline program. It is a program that many of our constituents rely upon to gain access to vital communications and emergency services and it must be updated in a way that does not negatively impact participants or create barriers to entry.  
Sincerely,

cc: Commissioner Mignon Clyburn  
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel  
Commissioner Ajit Pai  
Commissioner Michael O'Rielly

Together Strengthening our Community,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dannielle M. Glaros".

Dannielle M Glaros, Council Member  
Prince George's County Council, District 3