CAPITAL REGION CHAMBER

RE: MB Docket No. 15-149

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

Dear Chairman Wheeler,

The Capital Region Chamber is an advocate for area businesses to promote economic prosperity in the Albany area. Our job is to develop a robust regional economy by ensuring we have innovative, responsible employers in our area. We take pride in providing leadership and resources to our 2,800 members and their 150,000 local employees. Today, we are writing to share with you a major proposal in the cable broadband industry that we believe would positively impact our region.

Charter Communications, Inc., Time Warner Cable Inc. (TWC), and Bright House Networks LLC (BHN) recently filed an application with the New York Public Services Commission seeking permission to form the pro-broadband, pro-consumer company, New Charter.

Approximately 3.2 million of New Charter's estimated 23.9 million customers would be New Yorkers, reaching 1,100 communities across the state. New Charter is dedicated to bringing a better experience and service to customers by providing the latest cloud-based technology, faster download speeds, no extra charges for heavy internet usage, and no modem fees. Customers will benefit from a commitment to network neutrality that eliminates any stress over data usage. In addition, New Charter's slowest broadband tier would be 60 Mbps, still less expensive than TWC's current base tier package. This would be especially helpful for small businesses, teleworkers, and start-ups.

New Charter would also be committed to good corporate citizenship, a quality we take pride in throughout the Albany region. With an estimated 11,100 employees in the state, New Charter would be a significant employer and its practices would influence those in its industry and in our greater community. Integral to New Charter's diversity and inclusion program would be its partnerships with educational institutions and nonprofits as well as minority, women, veteran and disabled-owned businesses. Albany area organizations stand to benefit greatly from these initiatives. Not only would our underserved communities gain greater opportunities locally, but they would be partnered with a company that has a national reach.

New Charter would also invest heavily in our region's infrastructure. It has committed to building out one million line extensions of its networks into residential areas within its footprint beyond where it currently operates, including in New York. These new facilities would help provide high-speed service to rural and other underserved areas. New Charter would also invest at least $2.5 billion in the building-out of networks into commercial areas, creating additional, much-needed competition in the commercial sector.

We hope you will reflect on the benefits an advanced, consumer-oriented New Charter will bring to the Capital Region, and join us in supporting the merger.

Sincerely,

Mark N. Eagan, CCE
Chief Executive Officer

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