Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 16, 2015

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

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

We are writing to support an Alaska specific solution for our rate-of-return and competitive carriers that mirrors the Commission's sensible solution for the State's price cap carrier. As you well know, in many of our remote Alaska communities broadband is a crucial component in public safety, educating our youth, healing our sick, and creating economic opportunity for all. We recognize and commend your dedication to bringing broadband to the most remote and sparsely populated regions of our nation.

Thank you for visiting Alaska last summer to meet our providers and to listen to their stories of success and hear firsthand the challenges in deploying wireline and wireless broadband throughout our vast State. Stabilizing the high-cost fund in Alaska is essential to realizing the statutory goal of providing our most isolated rural consumers with communications services that are comparable to those available in the nation's urban centers.

It is our expectation that remote Alaska does not get lost in the national rate-of-return reform discussion. We urge you and your colleagues on the Commission to approve and implement an Alaska specific solution as part of your effort to advance broadband through universal service reform by the end of the year. If it is not possible to include an Alaska-specific solution in the Commission's national rate-of-return reform, at a minimum we request you set aside the current high cost funding currently going to Alaska.

Our rate-of-return and wireless carriers cannot afford to allow this national reform effort to bypass them, or constrain an Alaska specific solution. Thank you for your consideration of this important Alaskan issue. We look forward to hearing your plans for a more complete solution for Alaska rate-of-return carriers.

Sincerely,

Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator

Dan Sullivan
United States Senator

Don Young
Congressman for All Alaska

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

March 1, 2016

The Honorable Don Young
U.S. House of Representatives
2314 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Young:

Thank you for your letter in support of an Alaska-specific solution for rate-of-return and competitive carriers that serve Alaska. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses in rural America, including Alaska, have the same opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the 21st century economy. We are focused on updating the universal service high-cost program to ensure that we are delivering the best possible voice and broadband experiences to rural areas within the confines of our Connect America budget, while providing increased certainty and predictability for all carriers and a climate for increased broadband expansion.

I can assure you that I am very much aware of the proposal by the Alaska carriers. In fact, since becoming Chairman, I have heard from many carriers about the unique operating conditions and challenges faced by those serving Alaska. A framework tailored to these unique circumstances merits serious consideration. Commission staff are actively reviewing the Alaska specific solutions that have been proposed and I expect the Commission to address this important issue in the near future. In the meantime, I look forward to working with you as we continue the work of reforming and modernizing the high-cost universal service fund program – as well as other components of the Fund – to ensure that all Americans have access to robust voice and broadband services.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Tom Wheeler

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

March 1, 2016

The Honorable Dan Sullivan
United States Senate
702 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Sullivan:

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Sincerely,

Tom Wheeler

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

March 1, 2016

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
United States Senate
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

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Tom Wheeler