

May 12, 2016

Chairman Tom Wheeler
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel
Commissioner Ajit Pai
Commissioner Michael O'Rielly
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: *Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90

Dear Chairman Wheeler and Commissioners Clyburn, Rosenworcel, Pai, and O'Rielly:

We are fire chiefs, police chiefs and sheriffs in Arizona, and we are writing you to emphasize the importance of continuing to fund voices services for the most rural parts of our state. Arizona, like many states, has some very rural and remote areas with challenging terrains. Landline voice services remain the primary method of communications for these areas and remain vital for emergency services, particularly before, during, and after extreme weather events.

Recently, Arizona has experienced severe forest fires and other extreme weather events such as the Willow Fire in Mohave Valley in August 2015, the Dean Peak Fire in Kingman in July 2013, the Yarnell Wildfire in June 2013 that tragically killed 19 firefighters, and Monsoon Season flooding in the Kingman area in the summers of 2013 and 2014. Please see the pictures of some of these devastating events below. While extreme weather events and wildfires can happen anywhere, the rural and remote residents of Arizona experience some of the most extreme weather events, which is made even more challenging by the distance of residents from emergency services.

In all of these examples, landline telephone service was critical for emergency services, and it was vital to restore communications as quickly as possible if they were knocked out. Restoring landline service is especially important in these very rural areas because there is frequently no wireless service, and our residents rely on telephone as the primary link to emergency services. First responders rely on maintaining that connection during emergencies and ensuring that communications are restored as quickly as possible if a weather event takes down communications.

Telephone service in remote areas is also particularly important due to reverse 911. Reverse 911 (also called emergency telephone notification) allows first responders to call residents in advance of and during natural disasters to give an early warning and communicate updates. For example, reverse 911 is especially useful with

notifications during forest fires because it enables emergency responders to nearly instantaneously warn residents to evacuate if they may be in the path of a fire, which can change direction at a moment's notice.

Landline voice service remains too important of a service to emergency responders in rural and remote locations to put at risk through a failure to provide adequate funding. Accordingly, we would urge the Commission to take into account the importance of emergency services, including 911 and reverse 911, in ensuring that Arizona's most rural residents can continue to access voice services.

Sincerely,

Jim McCabe, Mohave County Sheriff
Robert J. DeVries, City of Kingman Chief of Police
Jake Rhoades, City of Kingman Fire Chief
Joseph Dedman Jr., Apache County Sheriff

Willow Fire in Mohave Valley AZ:



Dean Peak Fire in Kingman, AZ:



Yarnell Fire



Monsoon Season Floods and Thunderstorms in Kingman AZ:

