21 Dupont Circle NW
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036

December 9, 2008

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

***Ex Parte* Notice**

Re: WC Docket Nos. 05-337, 03-109, 06-122, 04-36
CC Docket Nos. 96-45, 99-200, 96-98, 01-92, 99-68

Dear Ms. Dortch,

On December 9, 2008, H. Keith Oliver of Home Telephone Company, Catherine Moyer of Pioneer Communications, Roger Nishi of Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom, Robert DeBroux of TDS Telecom, Paul Cooper of Fred Williamson & Associates, Inc., John Rose and Stuart Polikoff of the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO), and Derrick Owens of the Western Telecommunications Alliance (WTA) had four meetings at the FCC. The first meeting was with Nick Alexander, Wireline Legal Advisor to Commissioner McDowell. The second meeting was with Scott Bergmann, Senior Legal Advisor to Commissioner Adelstein. The third meeting was with Greg Orlando, Wireline Legal Advisor to Commissioner Tate. The fourth meeting was with Dana Shaffer, Donald Stockdale, Marcus Maher, Randy Clarke, Alex Minard, and Jennifer McKee of the Wireline Competition Bureau.

The purpose of all four meetings was to encourage the Commission to adopt, as quickly as possible, the Alternative Proposal for comprehensive universal service and intercarrier compensation reform contained in Appendix C of the November 5th Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM) in the above-captioned dockets. The Alternative Proposal contains the minimum support and protections that rural, rate of return (RoR)-regulated incumbent local exchange carriers (ILECs) need to continue serving as carriers of last resort (COLRs) and make broadband Internet access service available to 100 percent of their customers within five years,

which the Proposal would require. We pointed out that from the perspective rural RoR ILECs, the Alternative Proposal is far from ideal, as there are many provisions which, taken individually, inhibit these carriers' ability to invest in their networks and serve as COLRs. These include the freeze imposed on rural RoR ILECs' study area high-cost support, maintaining the status quo on intercarrier compensation payments for IP/PSTN traffic during the ten-year transition rather than affirmatively requiring payment from IP/PSTN services, and the new "additional costs" standard for determining reciprocal compensation rates which will produce rates of nearly zero. Nevertheless, OPASTCO and WTA support adoption of the Alternative Proposal, recognizing that is a fair and balanced compromise of the interests of numerous stakeholders. However, that support is conditioned upon the Proposal being adopted with all of the items included in OPASTCO and WTA's October 29, 2008 *ex parte* letter that was included in Appendix D of the FNPRM. So long as the Alternative Proposal is adopted with all of these items, it will provide rural RoR ILECs with the stable and certain revenue flows necessary for them to continue serving as COLRs and to meet the Commission's expectations for broadband availability throughout their service areas.

In accordance with FCC rules, this letter and the attached document is being filed electronically in the above-captioned dockets.

Sincerely,

Stuart Polikoff
Director of Government Relations
OPASTCO