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FCC Mail Room

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October 26, 2008

WC Docket Nos. : 05-337 ; 03-109 ; 06-122
CC Docket Nos. : 01-92 ; 96-45 ; 99-68 ; 96-78
99-200 ; 04-36

Deborah Tate
Federal Communications Commission

Re: Keep Rural Telephone and Broadband Service Affordable

Dear Deborah Tate:

In difficult economic times, we depend on our government to look out for people who are already struggling to get by, not make things worse. I know that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has been working with the telephone companies for many years to reform the system of access charges paid from one company to another, but there is no reason to rush into making a bad situation worse.

The Intercarrier Compensation proposal the FCC is about to enact would require residential customers, including the elderly, single parents and low income users in smaller markets, to absorb network costs now borne by telecommunications providers. The companies that benefit the most from this proposal are two Fortune 100 companies that are the largest, well-financed, integrated carriers in the world. Meanwhile local subscribers like me could see our monthly phone bills increase by \$2 to \$18. This may not sound like a lot of money to the commissioners of the FCC, but for people like me, in these tough times, it could be the difference between having phone service or not. I think reform that expands the availability of broadband services is a good idea, but not if I cannot afford even to have a phone line at all.

Smaller telephone providers depend on the access charges they receive from large carriers to enable them to provide service to even the most remote rural household. The investment these companies make in telephone and broadband infrastructure are vital for economic development in rural areas. The FCC proposal would force these companies to scale back their investment in equipment and services, hinder economic growth, and potentially cost jobs that we really need in our area.

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There are other alternative proposals out there that could reform intercarrier compensation without harming telephone subscribers or their local carrier. With the national election just days away, I think the FCC has to stop and fully consider all these proposals. Why should the FCC rush forward and risk doing irreparable harm to telephone subscribers and rural telecom investment when the whole country is focused on another vote?

* I urge you to stop the rush to consider the proposed order on November 4th.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James Coffman". The signature is fluid and extends to the right.

JAMES COFFMAN
928-753-4840