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U.S. HELSINKI COMMISSION

April 2, 2009

The Honorable Michael Copps
Acting Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Copps:

As you know, Embarq and CenturyTel have filed an application for the Federal Communications Commission to consent to their merger. I am writing to offer my support.

I have been pleased with Embarq's commitment to my community as a communications provider, employer and good corporate citizen in eastern North Carolina, and I am glad they have chosen to merge with another investment-grade carrier without taking on any new debt. An often-overlooked component of rural broadband policy is the importance of financially healthy providers to make sustainable investments. Economic development is especially important in the First District of North Carolina, which has a higher unemployment rate and lower per-capita income than at least 90 percent of congressional districts.

As the telecommunications voice market becomes more competitive, this merger will allow the new company to maintain the scale necessary to make broadband investments. In addition, CenturyTel has made important investments in an Internet backbone, IPTV products and 700 MHz spectrum that will be enhanced to the benefit of consumers when combined with Embarq's local networks.

Thank you for considering my views and please do not hesitate to contact me on this or any other matter.

Thank you very much.

Very truly yours,

G.K. Butterfield
Member of Congress

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