

**Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of)	
)	
Connect America Fund)	WC Docket No. 10-90
)	
A National Broadband Plan for Our Future)	GN Docket No. 09-51
)	
Establishing Just and Reasonable Rates for Local Exchange Carriers)	WC Docket No. 07-135
)	
High-Cost Universal Service Support)	WC Docket No. 05-337
)	
Developing an Unified Intercarrier Compensation Regime)	CC Docket No. 01-92
)	
Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service)	CC Docket No. 96-45
)	
Lifeline and Link-Up)	WC Docket No. 03-109

**REPLY COMMENTS OF
PCIA—THE WIRELESS INFRASTRUCTURE ASSOCIATION**

I. INTRODUCTION

PCIA—The Wireless Infrastructure Association (“PCIA”) hereby submits these reply comments in response to the above captioned Federal Communications Commission (“FCC” or “Commission”) *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* and *Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* regarding Universal Service Fund (“USF” or “Fund”) and intercarrier compensation reform.¹

¹ *In re* Connect America Fund, A National Broadband Plan for Our Future, Establishing Just and Reasonable Rates for Local Exchange Carriers, High-Cost Universal Service Support, Developing an Unified Intercarrier Compensation Regime, Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service, Lifeline and Link-Up, WC Docket No. 10-90, GN Docket No. 09-51, WC Docket No. 07-135, WE Docket No. 05-337, CC Docket No. 01-92, CC Docket No. 96-45, WC Docket No. 03-109, *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, FCC 11-13 (rel. Feb. 9, 2011).

Reforming USF and the intercarrier compensation regime to more efficiently support the deployment of broadband, including wireless, is of vital importance to the Commission's goal of "expanding the reach and reducing the cost of broadband deployment."² Commenters agree that the Commission should facilitate the efficient use of wireless support structures through its public interest obligations and rules for supported providers by requiring collocation opportunities on wireless support structures built with Connect America Fund ("CAF") support where feasible for the given deployment. Such a public interest obligation will speed the deployment of wireless broadband while not unduly burdening fund recipients.

II. THE COMMISSION SHOULD ENCOURAGE COLLOCATION AS AN EFFECTIVE METHOD OF INCREASING WIRELESS COVERAGE, CAPACITY AND COMPETITION

In its initial comments, PCIA encouraged the Commission to require collocation opportunities on wireless support structures constructed with CAF support under certain circumstances.³ Efficiencies are achieved when wireless providers share the underlying physical support structure for wireless facilities, and ultimately collocation promotes the Commission's goals for improving coverage and competition across the country.⁴ Collocation of wireless facilities on wireless support structures reduces the cost of deployment of current and next generation wireless facilities, speeds the build out wireless networks and facilitates competitive entry into the market. The Commission recognized as much in its 14th Mobile Wireless Competition Report when it found that "the ability of wireless service providers to lease space

² See *In re* Acceleration of Broadband Deployment: Expanding the Reach and Reducing the Cost of Broadband Deployment by Improving Policies Regarding Public Rights of Way and Wireless Facilities Siting, WC Docket No. 11-59, *Notice of Inquiry*, FCC 11-51 ¶ 1 (rel. Apr. 7, 2011).

³ Comments of PCIA – The Wireless Infrastructure Association, WC Docket No. 10-90, GN Docket No. 09-51, WC Docket No. 07-135, WE Docket No. 05-337; CC Docket No. 01-92, CC Docket No. 96-45, WC Docket No. 03-109, at 3 (filed April 18, 2011) ("Comments of PCIA").

⁴ *Id.*

for new cell sites on established towers can ease and speed their entry into new geographic areas by eliminating the need to build a new tower.”⁵

Sprint Nextel also agrees that this approach “would foster competition among different technology platforms. . . [and] help to foster competition in markets in which entry by multiple service providers in competition with the subsidized carrier might otherwise be economically infeasible.”⁶ Requiring collocation opportunities on wireless support structures constructed with CAF support, when feasible, reduces the capital costs of deploying in traditionally unserved or underserved geographies, thereby facilitating competitive entry and efficiently increasing wireless coverage and capacity.⁷

III. REQUIRING COLLOCATION WILL NOT UNDULY BURDEN CONNECT AMERICA FUND RECIPIENTS

PCIA recommends that the Commission create public interest obligations that encourage the efficient use of wireless support structures, including requiring collocation opportunities on wireless support structures constructed with CAF support to the extent feasible for a given deployment.⁸ Other commenters argue that such public interest obligations are “unnecessary to protect consumers, and . . . onerous.”⁹ To the contrary, sharing wireless infrastructure is beneficial to consumers and not an undue burden.

Wireless support structure owners have the incentive to allow the maximum number of collocations per structure. The highly competitive wireless infrastructure industry is comprised of hundreds of infrastructure providers that are independent from spectrum licensees as well as

⁵ *In re* Implementation of Section 6002(b) of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993, WT Docket No. 09-66, *Fourteenth Report*, FCC 10-81 ¶ 291 (rel. May 20, 2010) (“14th Mobile Wireless Competition Report”).

⁶ Comments of Sprint Nextel Corp., WC Docket No. 10-90, GN Docket No. 09-51, WC Docket No. 07-135, WE Docket No. 05-337; CC Docket No. 01-92, CC Docket No. 96-45, WC Docket No. 03-109, at 52 (filed April 18, 2011).

⁷ Comments of PCIA at 3.

⁸ *Id.* at 3.

⁹ Comments of AT&T Inc., WC Docket No. 10-90, GN Docket No. 09-51, WC Docket No. 07-135, WE Docket No. 05-337; CC Docket No. 01-92, CC Docket No. 96-45, WC Docket No. 03-109, at 148-152 (filed April 18, 2011).

licensees that voluntarily market their support structure assets to other licensees.¹⁰ As with any other commercial real estate venture, it behooves the structure owner to allow as many tenants as possible on the support structure and to construct facilities to maximize this potential. Accordingly, the addition of more providers is not a disincentive for the first provider to undertake the initial deployment.

Commenters also argue that the Commission's proposed public interest obligations are so burdensome that it would discourage providers from participating in the CAF program and would, therefore, undermine the "public interest."¹¹ Public interest obligations, as PCIA noted in its initial comments, are a traditional element of the USF.¹² Because sharing reduces the cost of deployment, speeds build out and spurs competitive entry into the market, encouraging collocation on wireless support structure is beneficial to consumers and in the public interest.

While collocation is efficient and enables competition, local and state regulations may impose burdensome conditions that make collocation infeasible or even impossible.¹³ Although it is common industry practice to construct wireless support structures that are capable of supporting antennas from multiple providers, localities often impose height limitations and other zoning restrictions that can effectively reduce the space available for collocation opportunities.¹⁴ By recognizing that collocation opportunities may not be viable on some CAF-supported wireless support structures under certain circumstances, the Commission can encourage the efficient use of wireless support structures while not burdening the build out of wireless networks.

¹⁰ Comments of PCIA at 4.

¹¹ Comments of AT&T Inc., WC Docket No. 10-90, GN Docket No. 09-51, WC Docket No. 07-135, WE Docket No. 05-337; CC Docket No. 01-92, CC Docket No. 96-45, WC Docket No. 03-109, at 148-152 (filed April 18, 2011).

¹² Comments of PCIA at 2.

¹³ *Id.* at 3.

¹⁴ *Id.*

