



STATE OF ARKANSAS
MIKE BEEBE
GOVERNOR

August 11, 2011

Julius Genachowski, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

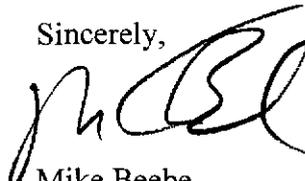
Dear Chairman Genachowski:

You have frequently observed that existing FCC programs direct generous funding to some rural areas, while other rural areas receive very little. Thus, two neighbors can have vastly different telecommunications service, with one enjoying state-of-the-art, fiber-optic broadband and the other suffering from poor or non-existent Internet access. This situation is an acute problem in Arkansas. Too many Arkansans lack broadband and have no prospect of receiving it soon, unless the FCC reforms Universal Service and intercarrier compensation.

As you know, the three wireline providers that serve 84% of this rural state's land area – AT&T, CenturyLink, and Windstream - have made significant broadband investment in our state and are leaders in pushing broadband services and speeds deeper into their networks and to the greatest number of customers possible. However, much work still needs to be done to reach the highest-cost, remote areas. These three companies are among several that have recently joined to file America's Broadband Connectivity Plan with the FCC. Each company involved in shaping this agreement has made concessions to end years of stalemate and help attain a significant national goal: a modern, financially stable strategy for delivering broadband to virtually all of rural America. Simultaneously, three organizations representing smaller carriers – the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association, the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies, and the Western Telecommunications Alliance – have agreed to join the larger companies in working for reform and have submitted a complementary proposal to the FCC.

Rural Arkansans have waited for broadband service for years, and the difficult politics of Universal Service reform, as well as distance, terrain, and demographics, has been a major stumbling block. I urge you to take advantage of this historic opportunity, while there is unprecedented industry consensus, to push through reforms in 2011. We may never see a better chance than this, and it's time to end the waiting for those without broadband. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Mike Beebe

MB:jb

CC: The Honorable Mark Pryor
The Honorable John Boozman
The Honorable Rick Crawford
The Honorable Mike Ross
The Honorable Tim Griffin
The Honorable Steve Womack