

Broadband has gone from being a luxury to a necessity for full participation in our economy and society ? for all Americans. For that reason, the FCC has adopted comprehensive reforms of its Universal Service Fund (USF) and Intercarrier Compensation (ICC) systems to accelerate broadband build-out to the 18 million Americans living in rural areas who currently have no access to robust broadband infrastructure. This reform the FCC claims will expand the benefits of high-speed Internet to millions of consumers in every part of the country by transforming the existing USF into a new Connect America Fund (CAF) focused on broadband. However, while I appreciate USF reform I worry it will just pad the industry profits of the monopolist communications giants. Please ensure protections are put in place for consumers to experience the benefits of expanded broadband via USF that don't allow price gouging by providers to make up for any USF related taxes their obligated to pay.

The FCC further claims: Consumers everywhere ? both urban and rural ? will benefit. Reform will not only drive economic growth in rural America, but will expand the online marketplace nationwide, creating jobs and businesses opportunities across the country.