

Concerned Citizens for Better Broadband In Greene County NY



March 28, 2012

The Honorable Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

As a principal in a company that helps companies market their products to military consumers and a former member of AT&T's global marketing team where I managed the company's response to our country's special communications needs presented by actions in Iraq and Afghanistan, I know firsthand the importance of modern telecommunications services. My partner and I write to you today on behalf of ***The Concerned Citizens for Better Broadband in Greene County, NY*** because we are concerned about our country's failure to recognize that we are lagging in our efforts to provide our citizens with access to affordable broadband services, most especially in rural areas

While many countries have provided incentives to carriers to build out their networks and expand access to broadband to all residents, the US continues to stumble along. Specifically, with regard to rural communities:

--The FCC broadband maps are a noble effort, but a major failure in depicting accurate information about land-based carrier alternatives. Information provided by carriers grossly overstates service availability. To provide a single personal example, the Broadband maps indicated that DSL service was available from a Central Office in a rural community in the Hudson Valley, when in fact Verizon had not enabled the office.

--Corrective measures envisioned by ARRA funding relied on these inaccurate maps to help gate applications, but unfortunately further cut off communities in desperate need of assistance.

-- State regulation of cable TV is promoting *de facto* commercial monopolies that permanently disenfranchise segments of underserved communities and allow cable companies to offer mediocre service as a matter of course while they collect very high fees. Also, the VoIP alternative is giving impetus to the regulated Regional Bell Operating Companies who can suboptimize the corresponding public switched network as they concentrate on wireless opportunities.

--The lack of *national will* to ensure that every home has a high speed connection to the internet, and most especially the homes of people with school age children, is redefining the meaning of 'The Haves and the Have Nots'. It is perverse that, as Korea rolls out 100Mbps country wide, we are sanctioning a two-tiered public educational system that leaves some children without the modern education and learning momentum that broadband guarantees.

While deployment of widespread terrestrial broadband is a long-term goal, wireless broadband alternatives must also be explored, so that they can be tested, refined, improved and eventually become not just viable but a reliable choice. We recognize that Korea is a country about the size of New Jersey so their solution is impractical for the U. S. at this time. More so the reason we must support innovators in the competitive wireless telecommunications market so that we can achieve even better solutions. It is time to change our approach. We need our leaders in Washington to change course and work towards promoting a process that will serve to bring competition to our nation's wireless industry.

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With significant gaps in wireless coverage in New York's rural communities and increased demand for reliable mobile broadband bandwidth in areas with high-speed coverage or no coverage at all, now is the time for the FCC to follow through on its promise to help companies like LightSquared quickly build out its nationwide ground-based network and bring more mobile broadband spectrum online for American consumers. Please work with the GPS industry and LightSquared to find a solution to the current GPS interference issues so that the company can deploy its network.

There are currently two nationwide providers of 4G-LTE services with 80 percent of all wireless users. These companies are struggling to meet usage demands as demonstrated by their restriction on data usage and price increases. To quote a popular phrase, the *"Fit has not yet hit the shan."* It is unreasonable to expect the appetite for bandwidth to subside. We are amused each time we see the Verizon wireless commercial depicting the person in the park watching a high-def movie on a smartphone. It ought to come with a consumer warning: Caution watching high-def movies on your smart phone will just about use up the data allowance in your monthly plan. But the convergence of communications and computing and entertainment is here. Portability is the new standard. One that people will happily pay for. What will happen when more people adopt that movie-watching in the park habit? How will demand get satisfied?

Now is the time to open the market to additional competition. Now is the time to allow companies like LightSquared and other innovators to bring a fresh perspective to the wireless broadband market. We are impressed by LightSquared's business proposition. Their wholesale 4G-LTE network will allow retail partners to offer customers access to a nationwide high-speed network that will cover the entire country.

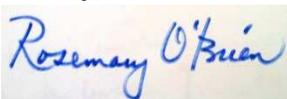
Our country's current approach to providing access to high-speed wireless broadband to its citizens is proving more and more insufficient each day. We need to change course. It is time to streamline our regulatory processes and honor our nation's inherent commitment to ensuring every person has access to affordable modern telecommunications services. Ubiquitous service is not a noble goal. It is a necessity if we intend to keep our edge in the world marketplace.

We respectfully encourage the FCC to follow through on its conclusions that Americans would significantly benefit from LightSquared's network and diligently work toward identifying solutions to the current GPS issues. We are no experts, but it appears the solution could be as simple as identifying an alternative spectrum.

We both are part of the 28 percent of Americans who live in rural America who still do not even have access to high-speed internet access, much less broadband, nor do we even have cellular service in our areas. We need help and we need it now.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Rosemary O'Brien



Kathleen Whitley-Harm

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Concerned Citizens for Better Broadband In Greene County NY

Cc:

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Senator Gillibrand
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