National Urban League

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May 7, 2014

The Honorable Thomas Wheeler
Chairman
The Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler,

Recently, several Members of Congress wrote to the Federal Communications Commission, correctly emphasizing that private investment in hardware, software and infrastructure is "one of the most promising sources" of economic growth for America.

Equally important, these Members of Congress wrote "For the auction to be a success, the Commission should maximize participation by both broadcasters incented to relinquish their spectrum rights and bidders seeking to buy those rights in the spectrum auction."

The National Urban League shares your goal of expanding high-speed wireless broadband to help promote jobs, economic growth, education, and social justice. Promoting employment and economic opportunity in urban communities and communities of color is a vital part of the National Urban League's overall mission, and we urge spectrum auction rules to explicitly reflect this important policy priority.

It is well known that African Americans and communities of color are rapidly adopting and using wireless broadband service, especially smartphones. With the growth in wireless applications for education, healthcare and other social goods, our community increasingly uses mobile service as a pathway for upward advancement.

As the FCC considers rules for its upcoming spectrum incentive auction, we express our support for rules that promote full, unrestricted participation by all interested companies, and which include provisions to ensure maximum participation by minority and women owned businesses in the auction process, as well as in Tier 2 roles providing build out, maintenance, and financing of the spectrum.

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The National Urban League respectfully requests that the Commission approve auction rules consistent with the ideas expressed herein.

An open and fair auction and an auction whose rules ensure maximum participation by minority and women owned businesses is the best way to ensure that the spectrum's full benefits quickly become available to the American people, and especially to urban communities, and communities of color.

We are available to discuss this further. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (212) 558-5437.

Very truly yours,

Marc H. Morial
President and Chief Executive Officer
National Urban League