

May 7, 2014

***Ex Parte* Notice**
VIA ECFS

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Connect America Fund, WC Docket No. 10-90; Technology Transitions Policy Task Force, GN Docket No. 13-5; Open Internet Remand, GN Docket No. 14-28; Expanding the Economic and Innovation Opportunities of Spectrum Through Incentive Auction, GN Docket No. 12-268; Policies Regarding Mobile Spectrum Holdings, WT Docket No. 12-269; Comments to Refresh the Record on Multilingual EAS, EB Docket No. 04-296

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On May 5, 2014 Edyael Casaperalta of the Center for Rural Strategies and representing the Rural Broadband Policy Group (“RBPG”) met Daniel Alvarez, Legal Advisor to Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) Chairman Tom Wheeler.

Ms. Casaperalta introduced Mr. Alvarez to the work of the Rural Broadband Policy Group, a national coalition of rural broadband advocates with two goals: 1) to articulate telecommunications policies that allow rural communities to participate fully in our nation’s culture, economy, and democracy, and 2) to encourage national collaboration among rural advocates for fast, affordable, and reliable telecommunications services.

Ms. Casaperalta discussed spectrum allocation, network neutrality, Title II Reclassification and IP Transition, the Rural Broadband Experiments, and multilingual emergency alerts, all issues that impact rural communities.

Ms. Casaperalta expressed concern for spectrum allocation decisions that would hurt rural communities. She recommended the FCC protect unlicensed TV spectrum, ensure that the largest two providers (AT&T and Verizon) do not control the majority of spectrum licenses, and set spectrum aggregation limits that promote competition in rural areas.

Ms. Casaperalta expressed concern over the proposed network neutrality rules that the FCC will consider in the upcoming Open Commission Meeting. She told Mr. Alvarez that the proposed weaker rules would hurt rural communities, citing an article published April 30, 2014 in the online publication The Daily Yonder. She said rural communities want “the full Internet” not a pay-to-play “hand-me-down.” She stated the FCC should “not break the Internet before rural America gets it” and recommended the FCC reclassify broadband as a Title II common carrier service.

Ms. Casaperalta also advocated for Title II reclassification so that the FCC can have full legal power to close the digital divide. Regarding Connect America Fund awards, she recommended the FCC use the power of Title II to enforce Carrier Of Last Resort obligations and maintain consumer protections in voice service and extend them to wired and wireless broadband services.

Ms. Casaperalta congratulated the FCC for launching the Rural Broadband Experiments and extending this funding opportunity to non-incumbent providers like municipalities, co-ops, non-profits and anchor institutions. She recommended the FCC allocate the maximum possible amount of funding for the experiments.

Finally, Ms. Casaperalta was pleased to hear that the FCC has extended the comment period to refresh the docket regarding Multilingual Emergency Alert Systems. She stated that improving our emergency alert systems to include multiple languages is a necessary requirement that can save lives in rural areas. She offered the example of a Spanish-speaking family in rural Mississippi who risked their lives during Hurricane Katrina because no television or radio station broadcasted alerts in their language.

Ms. Casaperalta shared the attached handout with Mr. Alvarez. The handout is a PDF file of an article about network neutrality published in the Daily Yonder.

Respectfully submitted,



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