

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 2, 2017

The Honorable Ajit Pai, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai,

As you begin your tenure as Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), we urge your continued focus on ensuring access to mobile broadband services in rural America and closing the digital divide as a top priority for the Commission.

We appreciate your keen understanding of the benefits that mobile broadband brings to rural America, allowing “anyone, anywhere [to] innovate and succeed.” Reliable high-speed mobile broadband is critical to advancing telehealth services, precision agriculture, economic opportunities, education, public safety, and an ever growing list of new innovations and applications. It is necessary for our constituents, living in some of the most remote and rural areas, to participate in today’s digital economy.

We support your efforts to close the digital divide for low-income and rural Americans. Going forward, these efforts must include removing barriers to broadband deployment and promoting innovation, as well as adopting a Universal Service Fund (USF) Mobility Fund Phase II (MFII).

As you move forward with MFII, we ask that your efforts help to incent wireless carriers to preserve, upgrade, and expand mobile broadband in rural America, rather than degrade and reduce competition in areas that need it most. Competing in a capital-intensive environment, wireless carriers need long-term certainty of ongoing support to invest, deploy, maintain, and update their networks that provide vital mobile broadband services in rural areas. As the best example, certainty should come in the form of sufficient and predictable USF support in both the implementation of MFII and the transition away from legacy support mechanisms over the next several years.

Under your leadership, we urge the Commission to meet its statutory directive and ensure that the latest mobile broadband services are available across the nation, especially in rural America, and we thank you for your attention to this critically important issue.

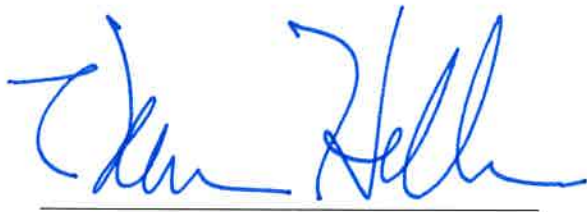
Sincerely,



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United States Senator



JOE MANCHIN, III
United States Senator



DEAN HELLER
United States Senator



THOM TILLIS
United States Senator



HEIDI HEITKAMP
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United States Senator



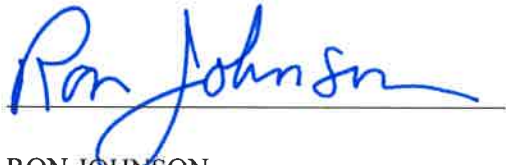
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SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO
United States Senator



PAT ROBERTS
United States Senator



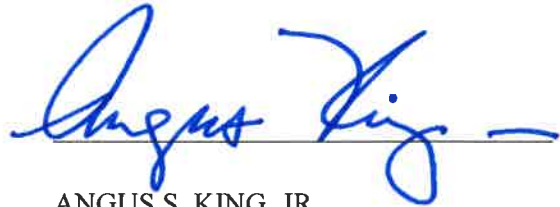
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United States Senator



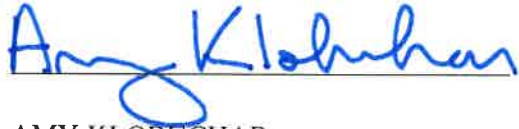
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