



April 11, 2017

Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

I am writing to you in regards to the open Commissioner seats at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

By way of background, I am the Chief Executive Officer of NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association. We represent approximately 850 rural small businesses deploying broadband infrastructure in 46 states. In turn, we are keenly aware of the importance – and challenges – of deploying high-speed broadband that responds to the needs of consumers and businesses in rural America, and sows the sustainable seeds of economic development. Recent reports highlighted that the investments and ongoing operations of small rural broadband providers contribute over \$24 billion annually to the nation’s gross domestic product, and supported over \$100 billion in e-commerce in 2015.

We are grateful your administration has already recognized the importance of broadband as a critical part of the broader conversation about how to rebuild American infrastructure for the 21st century. The FCC can and will play a key role in this discussion, particularly in the context of promoting and sustaining broadband infrastructure in rural America. This is why it is so important that those individuals ultimately nominated to fill the open Commissioner seats at the FCC have a solid grounding in market realities – an economic understanding of both where the market can work on its own without heavy-handed intervention as well as an awareness of where additional efforts are needed, such as in deeply rural areas, to address market failures.

The successes achieved thus far in broadband deployment are commendable, but they have not come easily. There are a number of regulatory challenges facing our rural carriers, including removing barriers to infrastructure deployment; ensuring that consistent, predictable Universal Service Fund support is available to justify the business case for infrastructure investment in rural America; and enabling consumers and businesses to make productive use of the networks that are built for years to come at affordable rates. As such, we feel it is critical that the new commissioners fully understand these challenges by having direct experience with the issues facing rural America. We believe such critical knowledge will help advance the nuanced, but ultimately common sense policy solutions necessary to *overcome* these obstacles.

We therefore urge you to nominate candidates who will not only work in conjunction with Chairman Pai on his timely Digital Empowerment Agenda, but will also complement the skills of their commissioner peers, adding the valuable input, vision and perspective needed to

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achieve the ambitious goals of the agenda and beyond, including: removing the underbrush of regulation, promoting innovation, increasing rural connectivity, and ultimately spurring economic development to the furthest corners of our great nation.

We must ensure that *all* American citizens can fully participate and enjoy the benefits of the global broadband economy. Nominating candidates who are both steeped in the complicated challenges of varying kinds of communications markets and also familiar in particular with considerable successes to date of broadband deployment in rural America will constitute an important step toward that goal.

Thank you for your consideration of this correspondence. I look forward to continuing to work with you and your administration to achieve our shared goal of universal broadband for all Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shirley Bloomfield". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Shirley Bloomfield

Chief Executive Officer

NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association