



August 26, 2020

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*

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On Tuesday, August 25, 2020, the undersigned on behalf of NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association (“NTCA”) spoke with Preston Wise, wireline advisor to Chairman Ajit Pai.

During this conversation, I expressed concerns about the impacts of the resurgent budget control mechanism on rural local exchange carriers receiving cost-based Connect America Fund–Broadband Loop Support and/or High Cost Loop Support. This mechanism will reduce by more than \$37 million over the next twelve-month period the amount of universal service support to be received by several hundred small rural companies and cooperatives that are currently making every effort to keep Americans connected and to keep their networks running in the face of a national emergency. I therefore requested that the effectiveness of the budget control be waived for the pendency of the COVID-19 national emergency. The continued availability of these funds would sustain essential operations at a time when smaller providers are facing unprecedented challenges in keeping Americans connected and customer uncollectibles remain high.

Thank you for your attention to this correspondence. Pursuant to Section 1.1206 of the rules of the Federal Communications Commission, a copy of this letter is being filed via ECFS.

Sincerely,

/s/ Michael R. Romano

Michael R. Romano
Senior Vice President –
Industry Affairs & Business Development
NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association

cc: Preston Wise