



February 22, 2022

Notice of Ex Parte

Marlene Dortch
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street, NE
Washington, DC 20054

Re: Protecting Against National Security Threats to the Communications Supply Chain Through FCC Programs, WC Docket No. 18-89

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On February 17, 2022, the undersigned visited via video conference with the following members of the staff of Federal Communications Commission (“FCC” or “Commission”) Chairwoman Rosenworcel: Trent Harkrader, Acting Special Advisor to the Chairwoman and Wireline Competition Bureau Deputy Chief, and Ramesh Nagarajan, Acting Legal Advisor, Wireline, to discuss the Secure and Trusted Communications Reimbursement Program.

The group discussed how the \$1.9 billion appropriated by Congress for reimbursement falls far short of what is needed for providers to remove and replace Huawei and ZTE equipment from networks. As it stands currently, participating carriers will receive approximately one-third of the funding they have requested to remove equipment deemed unsecure. The Commission could not have anticipated the number of applicants to be quadruple of what was estimated and the amount of necessary funding to be triple. The amount Congress appropriated was based on out of date and incomplete information. Additionally, supply chain shortages, work force shortages, and the compressed timeline have contributed to the shortfall.

NTCA explained that the current framework and funding amount does not serve the public interest and described potential avenues for relief. The Chairwoman’s representatives explained that they believe the Commission has no flexibility regarding funding due to Congressional directives. The Commission is obligated to announce the applicants’ individual qualifying funding amounts mid-June. NTCA indicated that we will continue to engage with Congress about additional funding and timing relief.

Marlene H. Dortch

February 17, 2022

Page 2 of 2

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

By: /s/ Jill Canfield

Jill Canfield

General Counsel, VP of Policy

NTCA – The Rural Broadband Association

4121 Wilson Blvd, Suite 1000

Arlington, VA 22203

703-351-2000

CC: Trent Harkrader
Ramesh Nagarajan