

of broadband connection that the Enhanced ACAM program was intended to bring within their reach. This as well as the unique circumstances underlying the need for relief justify grant of PTC's requests.

As the factual backdrop to the Petition, in response to the September 21, 2023 release of revised Enhanced ACAM offers, PTC engaged a consultant to review the specifics related to the offer, and the result of that was a determination that the offer did not accurately reflect the number of BSLs within the company's service area.⁴ Based upon the understanding that the errors could be resolved via the Fabric challenge process after the deadline for accepting the offer passed, PTC accepted its Enhanced ACAM offer.⁵ PTC subsequently undertook an even more detailed review of the BSLs within its entire service area, and in doing so came to the conclusion that corrective action was warranted for several BSLs (including geographic coordinates, building types and/or addresses that were inaccurate).⁶

Unfortunately, a series of minor mistakes, circumstances outside of PTC's direct control, and the timing for filing and completing Fabric challenges added up to an updated Enhanced ACAM service obligation and support amount that does not reflect the area that the company serves. First, an internal staff member proceeded under the mistaken belief that addressing the errors related to the BSLs at issue required removing each of those via the Fabric challenge process and then, in turn, seeking to add the very same locations back into the Fabric (but with the correct parameters) through a subsequent bulk challenge.⁷ In the midst of difficulties in

⁴ Petition, p. 4.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*, p. 5.

⁷ *Id.*

accomplishing the latter, the employee left PTC.⁸ This, the subsequent retirement and then passing of the General Manager, as well as confusion stemming from assurances made by an outside consultant, left the remaining (and very small) PTC staff without a full understanding of the extent of errors made up to that point or a clear understanding of what corrective action to take.⁹ Finally, PTC's second bulk Fabric challenge was not adjudicated until after the date had passed for further challenges that could have resulted in correcting the previous errors with respect to the BSLs at issue.¹⁰

Critically, as the Petition indicates, despite the circumstances discussed above, PTC undertook what should be viewed as a good faith effort to correct errors made in a timely and diligent manner. PTC attempted to resolve the errors through Fabric challenges, multiple contacts with CostQuest, the National Exchange Carrier Association and the Universal Service Administrative Company, as well as the hiring of new staff that worked with PTC's Fiber Network Engineer to review and submit via the challenge process evidence indicating that several hundred BSLs were missing from the Fabric.¹¹ Although compliance with Commission rules and processes is to be expected generally, PTC strived to identify and address the concerns described as soon as reasonably possible in light of the circumstances and took proactive measures upon discovering the problems in an attempt to rectify them.

Grant of the relief requested by PTC would serve the public interest. The *Enhanced ACAM Order's* "goal of ensuring all consumers, even those living in the costliest areas in the

⁸ *Id.*, p. 6.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*, p. 7.

¹¹ *Id.*, pp. 7-9.

nation, have access to affordable and reliable broadband service so that they can work, learn, engage, and obtain essential services no matter where they live”¹² will not be realized for several hundred rural consumers that will not obtain access to the level of service they otherwise would. As the Petition indicates, PTC has not identified any alternative source of funding to connect these approximately 400 consumers, and thus grant of the Petition would help ensure these locations will receive service consistent with the terms and intent of the Enhanced ACAM program.

For the foregoing reasons, NTCA supports grant of the relief sought by PTC.

Respectfully submitted,

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¹² *Connect America Fund*, et al., WC Docket No. 10-90, et al., Report and Order, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, and Notice of Inquiry, (“*Enhanced ACAM Order*”), ¶ 1.