Dear Chairman Wheeler:

I would like to address some of your questions with my comments. While I do not have the knowledge or experience to address all of the issues, I can tell you what my area is facing and make a few suggestions. The wireless connection we use in our home here in North Carolina is less adequate than the days of dial-up. Data content of today's internet requires much more than back in the day of dial-up. It's like using tin cans and string to call grandma in Florida. Totally inadequate! We have not tried satellite due to cost and reports by others of its shortfalls. My daughter no longer desires to continue her education, because even the required physical education class at the local community college was only offered on-line making it impossible to complete. My employer of 25 years now wants me to connect and share documents on-line---from anywhere---and I cannot do that with tin can technology. One cannot compete in today's economy without adequate broadband. This should not be the state of broadband just a few miles away from jobs in Research Triangle Park, Chapel Hill, Durham, and Raleigh, NC.

Our county has recently approved additional towers for mobile service but costs for data may be out of range for many. I inquired, and was given a cost for a moderate data plan that is just out of my budget. While there was a time that wireless data plans were unlimited, they are no longer available today. A data plan for a home use should not cost more than electricity.

#33. It has been my experience that the SBI and NTIA's published data has been a hinderance rather than a help in identifying unserved areas. I, of course, cannot speak for all of America, just my little piece of it. Since the day I first became knowledgeable of the maps and began checking them they have been wrong. The reporting of wired service at our address actually kept us from benefiting from stimulus funding to install satellite service in --2010. We were told we could not qualify because wired service was reported at our address. We would have had to sign a 2 year agreement with satellite, and paid all out of pocket, while the incumbent telecom kept telling us they were going to bring us DSL "in the spring", "later this year", "in about 6 months, we have the equipment in the warehouse now"...but we waited and nothing happened. It's 2014 and still nothing. While I have worked with the state of North Carolina to correct mapping for my census block and telephone exchange, information continues to be added that is in error. They report wireless service with up to 1 Gbps as available to my address. For some time it mapped my address in the wrong census block. I have not moved! There is a mechanism in the map to report that a provider does not serve an address. NTIA has done nothing with the feedback I've provided through the map. I reported the information at my address as being wrong over 30 times last year (my therapy on bad internet days!). How hard would it be to have a computer spit out a form to mail to my address? A mailed form could have allowed me to confirm why I reported no service and to confirm what is offered at my address. We do still have mail service! I could give them information that is better than they have. Mappers should be more diligent in getting accurate information from providers in the first place, perhaps providing actual addresses they serve, and only report after deploying the service rather than "plans". A new version of the map came out in July 2014 and the counters that record the error feedbacks have been set to zero again. The NTIA touted the new map in a news release of July 17, 2014 as showing broadband available to more Americans than ever with even faster speeds. If I indeed could get 1 Gbps service that would be true. I don't believe anyone in my county gets 1Gbps service. No one should be touting progress based on this data. My opinion, the National Broadband Mapping is a total waste of funds; the latest sequel is just another piece of fiction. I have contacted them by website, e-mail, and phone. I have come to believe that they do not know how to correct the map. Unserved pockets of homes like my area should have been identified years ago. We've been out there writing letters, calling, clicking "does not serve here", but it seems no one does anything with the information. I think a better picture of lack of deployment in America could have been obtained through questions on the 2000 or 2010 census forms. These forms would have reached the unconnected. Too late for that though, and please don't wait until the 2020 census to do. Surveys on public computers could give you a picture of why people are using them (lack of service, no computer, broken computer, unaffordability, etc.) Having to the report the lack of broadband service, or...
correct maps of broadband service on the internet make little sense anyway. Have your mappers come down here and show us where to dig ditches to lay fiber. That's how to get service to people! Our incumbent telecom provider has shown no interest in furthering broadband service in our exchange. They think poor people should not have it. Of course they do not use the term "poor", they want to serve where it is "economically feasible" only. I really can't say what equipment they use or if they have upgraded, all I know is they do not have equipment that allows us to connect through DSL. I'd have to just guess that they have not upgraded equipment. They are glad to offer residents satellite and mobile devices (with little signal) from other companies. After waiting over 10 years for DSL and not getting anything, and 32 years with the same land line, I have discontinued my service. They knew when they purchased our exchange that customers were demanding DSL expansion and upgrades were needed. I cannot be their customer anymore. They will tell you people don't want their land-line anymore. In my case that is not true. I just will not give anymore money to a company who does not service their customers. It is not that we live in a very remote area or that the population is sparse. Many neighbors work or have worked at RTP, UNC or for the state in Raleigh. My home is on a good state highway. The population in my census block has probably increased more than 5 times in the 30+ years we have lived here and is likely to do so again in the next 30 years given proper infrastructure. Computer labs are available in our county, but they are about 10-15 miles away and not available 24-7. They seem to be more than adequate in size, as quite frequently there are rows of unused computers. Of late I have seen more people sitting in their cars using the wi-fi on their own devices rather than using the computers in the labs. It certainly would be more efficient to use a computer at home. I think it is time to focus on service to the home for rural areas, rather than computer centers that are sometimes a 30 or 40 mile drive. I fear that census blocks such as mine, which are large and have been serviced by two different exchanges are being bypassed and erroneously reported as served. Some areas of our census block have great wired DSL service while others have nothing. #39. I do not feel like the deployment of broadband has been reasonable and timely. Neighboring rural areas have been 100% served for years. The difference has been in the type of incumbent provider. Rural Electric Cooperatives and municipal owned facilities who know their local customers seem to have done much better jobs of deploying advanced broadband than providers who pump their profits into buying up more exchanges and funding PAC's. Deployment should have a date and technology attached to it. If dates and technology of planned services were attached the maps would be more accurate and we would have something to at least plan on having. There definitely needs to be a distinction between planned and existing. Plans fall through....believe me ....we know! Last year our provider built a new hub in my census block, for high speed internet, TV service and Phone. They said they did not use Connect America Funding to build it. But they cannot connect people who are just one mile from it, because these homes are in a different exchange. There was already service (DSL) across the street from the "new hub". On the other side of my census block one home was served by bringing service across the river. Other homes there cannot be served because they have always been in "the other exchange". All the homes in the census block that are on the "other exchange" cannot get service due to the equipment not being compatible and the refusal to of the provider to upgrade. To my knowledge Connect America Funding has not been accepted in my exchange. For a long time our entire census block was reported as served with wired service, because one here and a few there had service. DSL has never been offered at my home.

#41. I think you should consider that the data you are using for deployment numbers comes from NTIA. This data shows continued improvement as I noted in #33 for my address, when the truth is the situation has remained unchanged for years. My rural address does show much improvement according to NTIA data(speeds up to 1 Gbps). Living in a rural area I cannot access certain industrial electricity services, city water, and sewer. There is no 8 lane freeway in front of my home. I have to wait a little longer for police and emergency response. I understand these differences and I believe there will be differences in service offered in rural areas vs. urban. But I don't see any reason why we should be denied minimal access to the internet. I would be OK with the deployed speeds for rural and urban homes being different, but the "minimum" should be the same standard.
#42 Deployment has not been timely. If it had been timely we wouldn't still be talking about it. Everything has moved to being on-line. I just read a question in a magazine and it referred me to an on-line address for the answer! We need internet access now for education, productivity, and communication.

#43 A county adjacent to us (similar rural geography), has a rural telephone cooperative that has been providing 100% of their customers with broadband for years. They are investing in fiber to upgrade their DSL. We have not seen the same investment or deployment from the incumbent phone provider in our phone exchange which has 100's of customers (or former customers) yet unserved. Except for mobile (3G and perhaps 4G) nontraditional providers are not coming in because there are barriers in NC to that sort of competition. I have been told that other carriers cannot get funding (CAF) for rural broadband as long as we are reported as served with wired service. We have essentially been held hostage. North Carolina's HB129 inhibits expansion by municipalities. Those barriers must be torn down.

#44 I cannot say how Executive Order #13616 has helped, but I can say that I see a lot of fiber deployed in our county in the form of "fiber to the neighborhood", "fiber for governmental purposes", "fiber for education", etc. but none of this is used to bring fiber to the home. It should have been mandated to make multi-use of the fiber deployment. "Dig Once" should have been employed on the local level too.

#45 Price, Quality, and Adoption: I think what we are seeing is that the cost is higher in areas where it can least be afforded. Even now I pay into the Universal Service Fund to provide service for others, while I cannot afford a $130 wireless plan (and it has no certainty of working) and have no cheaper wired access to fall back on. I think "prepaid" hotspots could be a great help in the realm of affordability. The down side here is that most wireless plans are more costly (data-wise) than wired service already, and from a budgeting standpoint those who cannot afford service shouldn't be purchasing the most costly broadband. I don't know of any that allow carry-over data if one wanted to conserve. As I stated before, I would advise using the public library computers, and other publically funded computer labs to conduct surveys on why these are being used. Then you will find out whether it is affordability, availability, or other factors. Most people who use the computers or wi-fi at the library or use wi-fi at McDonald's have one or more of these factors. I am not sure it will ever be affordable to all, but there should be options for those who need it (students, parents, for employment etc.) Perhaps a program where wireless connected devices are made available for educational purposes.

#47 Security is definitely an issue that needs to be addressed. There have been too many confirmed breaches--even in governmental agencies. I even have to hesitate in providing this information, because I know it is public and I don't really know all the places it goes or how long it will be there.

#49 Solutions are already available for the deployment of broadband in many areas, but there are barriers that must come down. First, areas such as where I live, must be reported accurately on maps. When this happens the rural cooperative, who knows how to serve rural areas with fiber, can plow fiber down this highway and bring my neighbors and myself real broadband service. Funding (from the Broadband Experiments or other Connect America Funds) should be quickly granted when a progressive plan such as this is presented. We (even those of us without broadband service) all pay into the Universal Service Fund through our phone bills (on both land-line and mobiles) and have been doing so for a lot of years now. We've made the investment, now we'd like to see this funding returned to provide the infrastructure for broadband service much needed here. Perhaps the Universal service fee needs to be restructured so that those without service are not the ones paying. The fee may need to be attached to broadband service itself. The digital divide is even greater now than it was when I had dial-up.

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