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# Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

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Hon. Tom Wheeler, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> St., SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler,

I'm writing to express my appreciation for recent activity at The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) concerning the provision of broadband to rural America. I am particularly encouraged by the portions of the Technology Transfer Order, released in January of this year, which included rural trials to deploy broadband by non-traditional providers.

As you may know, many of my constituents are at risk of being left on the wrong side of the Digital Divide. Without robust broadband, small towns are losing businesses and rural school children are lagging behind their urban peers and America is slowly but surely losing many of the rural places that enrich our national economy and culture.

Your agency's action in requesting expressions of interest to provide rural broadband by non-traditional recipients of Connect America Funds is an encouraging sign that you and your staff are exploring creative ways to address the broadband needs of rural America. I understand that over 1000 expressions of interest were filed for this program, including projects that would serve over 100 rural electric cooperative service territories. The low population numbers and sparse density of households make rural areas more difficult from both a business case standpoint and a service standpoint. Electric cooperatives have a long track record of providing affordable reliable utility service in challenging areas. In my district, I am pleased that SEMO Electric Cooperative filed an expression of interest. If funded this project would bring broadband service to 26,535 of my constituents.

Thank you in advance for your full and fair consideration of this application and I ask that you please keep me apprised of its progress. I encourage you to begin the rural broadband trials as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,



Jason Smith  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS