



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

August 11, 2014

The Honorable Lindsey O. Graham
United States Senate
290 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Graham:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding telecommunications mergers. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

As you know, the Commission generally is tasked with reviewing the proposed transfer of any FCC license and/or authorization to determine if such transfer is in the public interest. The Commission's task goes beyond looking only for competitive harms and includes whether the proposal would enhance competition. We also examine the impact of the proposed merger on the deployment of advanced services to all Americans, in addition to the diversity of ownership and the diversity of information services available to the public. Our review is separate – and our standard of review distinct – from those of the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), but the Commission staff does work closely with our colleagues in those agencies, as necessary and appropriate.

Additionally, the Commission conducts all of our reviews in a transparent manner, providing the public with a full opportunity to participate by submitting their views and comments on the impact of any proposed merger. I encourage your constituents to take part in any proposed merger proceeding that may impact them.

I fully agree with your views on the importance of this agency's commitment to ensure access to telecommunication services in rural South Carolina. Since the day I arrived at the Commission, I made clear that ensuring access to high-speed broadband networks for all Americans is one of the core elements of communications policy that must guide the work of the FCC. Access denied is opportunity denied. The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses in rural America have the same opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the United States of the 21st century. To that end, we are focused on updating the universal service program to ensure that we are delivering the best possible voice and broadband experiences to rural America within the confines of our Connect America budget, while providing increased certainty and predictability for all carriers and a climate for increased broadband expansion.

I look forward to continuing the work of reforming and modernizing the Universal Service Fund high-cost program – as well as other components of the Fund – and to working

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with stakeholders, including rural carriers and consumers, to ensure that all Americans have access to robust voice and broadband services.

I hope this information is helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", written in a cursive style.

Tom Wheeler