



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

April 24, 2018

The Honorable Ben Ray Luján
U.S. House of Representatives
2231 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Luján:

Thank you for your letter on the impact of the FCC's 2016 operating-expense limitations on closing the digital divide on Tribal lands. In my first remarks to FCC staff as Chairman, I declared that my highest priority would be making sure every American who wants high-speed Internet access can get it. Nowhere in America is the digital divide as stark as it is on Tribal lands. Too many Americans today are on the wrong side of the digital divide. That's why I am happy to report that on April 4, 2018, the Commission adopted an Order addressing this matter.

The Order adopted by the Commission allows certain rate-of-return carriers serving Tribal communities to recover higher levels of operational expenses from the Universal Service Fund, given the unique and challenging circumstances that make it more expensive to serve Tribal lands. This action will provide additional funding to these carriers to provide both voice and broadband services to their customers. To be sure, this was not the same Order I originally proposed in February 2017, a few weeks after I became Chairman. I would have extended support to even more carriers that serve Tribal lands. But in the interest of finally getting something done, I chose to find agreement with those commissioners who were willing to work in good faith on ways to help carriers serving Tribal lands.

Of course, more needs to be done. That's why, for example, the Commission recently agreed to solicit public input on the adoption of a Tribal Broadband Factor, which would provide additional financial assistance to carriers serving Tribal lands. But the recent Order is an important one that will help bring digital opportunity to struggling communities.

I appreciate your support for the Commission's efforts to promote broadband deployment in Tribal areas and throughout the country, and I look forward to continuing to work with you to close the digital divide. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ajit V. Pai".

Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

April 24, 2018

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Pallone:

Thank you for your letter on the impact of the FCC's 2016 operating-expense limitations on closing the digital divide on Tribal lands. In my first remarks to FCC staff as Chairman, I declared that my highest priority would be making sure every American who wants high-speed Internet access can get it. Nowhere in America is the digital divide as stark as it is on Tribal lands. Too many Americans today are on the wrong side of the digital divide. That's why I am happy to report that on April 4, 2018, the Commission adopted an Order addressing this matter.

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April 24, 2018

The Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Walden:

Thank you for your letter on the impact of the FCC's 2016 operating-expense limitations on closing the digital divide on Tribal lands. In my first remarks to FCC staff as Chairman, I declared that my highest priority would be making sure every American who wants high-speed Internet access can get it. Nowhere in America is the digital divide as stark as it is on Tribal lands. Too many Americans today are on the wrong side of the digital divide. That's why I am happy to report that on April 4, 2018, the Commission adopted an Order addressing this matter.

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