

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

January 31, 2013

The Honorable Julius Genachowski  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

We write to urge the Federal Communications Commission to consider ways to fully use all currently available Connect America Fund (CAF) resources in 2013 to meet our Nation's digital divide challenge.

Broadband enables new opportunities to improve economic development, education, and healthcare. Yet according to data from the Commission's Eighth Broadband Progress Report, nearly 300,000 New Mexicans, fourteen percent of our state's population, lack access to fixed broadband. The 2010 U.S. Census also reports that just 58 percent of New Mexicans use broadband at home when the national average is 80 percent. These statistics rank New Mexico 46th among U.S. States and highlight the digital divide challenge facing our State.

Many New Mexicans who do not have access to broadband live in rural areas served by "price cap" companies. Given the Commission's efforts to refine CAF rules to help such companies bring service to eligible unserved households, we urge you to consider proceeding this year with another round of CAF projects that fully uses universal service funds already set aside for this important work. Our understanding is that up to \$485 million in CAF I incremental support could be available in 2013.

This approach would be consistent with Section 254 of the Communications Act, which instructs the Commission to base its universal service policies on the principle that "[c]onsumers in all regions of the Nation, including low-income consumers and those in rural, insular, and high cost areas, should have access to telecommunications and information services... that are reasonably comparable to those services provided in urban areas...."

We therefore respectfully request that you invest all available CAF I incremental support this year, thereby narrowing the digital divide in New Mexico and across the nation.

Thank you for your consideration within your rules and guidelines. We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that all Americans enjoy access to broadband.

Sincerely,



Tom Udall  
United States Senator



Stevan Pearce  
United States Representative



Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



Michelle Lujan Grisham  
United States Representative