

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1605

COMMITTEES:  
AGRICULTURE  
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ETHICS  
RULES

January 18, 2013

Honorable Julius Genachowski  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> St. S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: *In the Matter of Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90,  
Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (Released: Nov. 19, 2012)

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In November 2011, the Federal Communications Commission began a transformation of the Universal Service Fund (USF) and intercarrier compensation systems. As part of reform, the cost of delivering modern communication services to high-cost rural areas will be underwritten in part by the new Connect America Fund (CAF), with a primary objective being the extension of broadband to as many unserved rural homes as possible. As the Commission noted at that time and again in its recent Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM), referenced above, “over 80 percent of the more than 18 million Americans unserved by broadband live in price cap territories.” For that reason, the FCC set aside \$600 million to invest in new broadband deployment in those territories during 2012 and 2013.

In light of the Commission’s goals stated in this latest proceeding, I urge you to proceed promptly to finalize rules for CAF Phase I incremental support so that the \$185 million unclaimed in 2012, as well as the original \$300 million anticipated for 2013, can be used to promote broadband in the rural Kansas communities I represent. Furthermore, the FCC must work to disburse all remaining CAF I funding in price cap territories as quickly as possible so the Commission can move toward implementation of the long term CAF II solution as laid out in the Order as expeditiously as possible.

Whether Kansans live in rural areas far from major shopping centers, or work in businesses fulfilling and delivering orders, or simply want convenient access to educational opportunities, remote health care applications, and the myriad other social interactions available on the Internet, robust, affordable broadband has become an essential facet of everyday life in our society.

Applications relying on a robust broadband infrastructure are now essential in rural America – but not only for rural Americans. Agricultural markets, emerging small businesses, online retailers, and families spread across the country and around the globe need dependable broadband access regardless of where they are located. I urge you to expedite the network

investments that finally would bring broadband to many corners of rural Kansas, and to ensure as well that such broadband remains available and affordable throughout all parts of America going forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pat Roberts", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

U.S. Senator Pat Roberts (R-KS)