



INDEPENDENT TELEPHONE & TELECOMMUNICATIONS ALLIANCE

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ITTA Proposes To Expand Mid-Size Carriers' Opportunities To Deploy Broadband To Unserved Areas

(WASHINGTON) The Independent Telephone & Telecommunications Alliance (ITTA) today submitted joint comments in the Federal Communications Commission's pending Connect America Fund (CAF) Phase I Incremental Support docket proposing modifications that would quickly invest \$485 million and significantly expand opportunities for mid-size price cap carrier customers to benefit from the program.

"The FCC created the Phase I Incremental Support program to spur immediate broadband buildout by providing funding to those carriers best positioned to deploy broadband infrastructure expeditiously, said ITTA President Genny Morelli. "The changes to the program proposed by ITTA jointly today are essential to achieving the FCC's purpose. Indeed, absent the proposed changes, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the FCC to close the broadband divide in the near future."

As proposed in the comments, the CAF Phase I Incremental Support program should be modified to:

- Expand the definition of unserved areas to include any census block that lacks access to broadband service with speeds of 4 Mbps downstream and 1 Mbps upstream. The National Broadband Map's speed tiers of 6 Mbps downstream and 1.5 Mbps upstream should be used as the proxy for the availability of 4/1 service.
- Adopt a reasonable process for challenging the status of areas where carriers intend to use Phase I support.
- Give price cap carriers the option to satisfy their buildout obligations with second-mile fiber deployments.

"The potential benefits of the modifications presented today by the price cap carrier community are huge," Morelli said. "These benefits, in the form of significantly increased levels of rapid

broadband deployment to rural consumers throughout the United States, will pay substantial dividends for years to come. The Commission should immediately adopt these changes and disburse the allocated funds so that they may be invested quickly.”

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ITTA represents mid-size communications companies that provide a broad range of high quality wireline and wireless voice, broadband, Internet, and video services to more than 23 million access lines in 44 states. For more information, please visit www.itta.us.