



July 17, 2018

The Honorable Marsha Blackburn
Chairman
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Doyle
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Blackburn and Ranking Member Doyle:

Competitive Carriers Association (CCA)¹ commends the House Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Communications and Technology (“Subcommittee”) for holding today’s important hearing on “Realizing the Benefits of Rural Broadband: Challenges and Solutions,” and its continued focus on policies that support preserving and expanding mobile broadband services in rural America. As I have testified before this Subcommittee, mobile broadband is a powerful economic driver and critical for full participation in today’s connected world, fueling benefits for rural consumers, schools, health care facilities, public safety, precision agriculture, and businesses of all sizes. Consumers in North America are already using 2.5 exabytes of mobile data each month, an amount that the recent Ericsson Mobility Report expects to skyrocket to a staggering 19 exabytes a month by 2023. To meet these exponentially growing demands for mobile data and realize the benefits of next generation networks, policymakers must remain focused on addressing broadband infrastructure deployment challenges and make certain that rural America is not left behind.

CCA thanks the Subcommittee for its bipartisan leadership to address several broadband deployment issues, and applauds the many accomplishments reflected by legislative efforts this Congress that are now law. In particular, CCA appreciates several legislative proposals enacted into law as part of the Repack Airwaves Yielding Better Access to Users of Modern Services Act of 2018, or RAY BAUM’S Act. The Rural Wireless Access Act will take steps to standardize mobile coverage data for purposes of Universal Service Fund programs or similar programs. The Spectrum Auctions Deposits Act removed a barrier to conducting critical spectrum auctions to keep up with consumer demand for mobile broadband services. The Viewer Protection Act will provide certainty to broadcasters and carriers that the 600 MHz band repacking will take place on or ahead of schedule and with sufficient resources to put this spectrum to use to serve consumers. The Rural Spectrum Accessibility Act will incentivize carriers to make otherwise unused spectrum available for service in rural areas. The SANDY Act will help keep Americans safe in times of disaster. These are all key policies, and consumers will benefit from the Subcommittee’s work to enact them into law.

¹ CCA is the nation’s leading association for competitive wireless providers and stakeholders across the United States. CCA’s membership includes nearly 100 competitive wireless providers ranging from small, rural carriers serving fewer than 5,000 customers to regional and national providers serving millions of customers. CCA also represents associate members including vendors and suppliers that provide products and services throughout the mobile communications supply chain

Despite these important steps, challenges to ubiquitous mobile broadband availability remain. CCA stands ready to work with the Subcommittee to continue progress to close the digital divide and provide all Americans with the latest mobile broadband services. That includes continued work on several bills currently pending before Congress, including:

- *H.R. 2903, the Rural Reasonable and Comparable Wireless Act of 2017;*
- *H.R. 6017, the Supplementing the Pipeline for Efficient Control of The Resources for Users Making New Opportunities for Wireless Act (SPECTRUM NOW Act);*
- *H.R. 4953, the Advancing Innovation and Reinvigorating Widespread Access to Viable Electromagnetic Spectrum Act (AIRWAVES Act); and,*
- *H.R. 1546, the Streamlining Permitting to Enable Efficient Deployment of Broadband Infrastructure Act of 2017 (SPEED Act).*

CCA urges the Subcommittee to build on legislative successes this year and continue to take concrete steps to provide all Americans, particularly those in rural America, with the benefits mobile broadband connectivity brings. To help close the digital divide, all carriers require sufficient access to spectrum, the invisible infrastructure that powers our industry, certainty and commonsense policies regarding broadband infrastructure deployment, and sufficient Universal Service Fund support based on reliable data. CCA commends the Subcommittee for its leadership on these issues, and looks forward to continued collaboration with the Subcommittee, Congress, the FCC, and the Administration to realize the benefits of rural broadband.

Please do not hesitate to contact CCA with any questions.

Sincerely,



Steven K. Berry
President & CEO
Competitive Carriers Association

CC: Chairman Greg Walden, House Committee on Energy and Commerce
Ranking Member Frank Pallone, House Committee on Energy and Commerce