

Congressman Russ Fulcher,

Thank you for your additional question following the field hearing in Bakersfield, California on Friday, May 10th, "Perspectives from the Fields: The State of Rural Broadband in America."

The challenges farmers face in high-speed Internet connectivity, including fixed wireless services, can vary significantly based on geography and proximity to existing network infrastructure. Farms located furthest from densely populated areas typically have the greatest difficulty accessing digital infrastructure. These areas are less likely to have access to last-mile and middle-mile fiber connections, and wireless towers are less common due to the lack of customer density. The cost to deploy high-speed wireless technology is significantly higher for farms without these available resources. These locations may require large, costly fiber builds and the erection of new vertical assets (towers).

Additionally, access to the radio frequency spectrum that best suits the needs of farms with dense crops is limited to the large wireless carriers who can afford to buy the spectrum at auction. With limited access to this RF spectrum, there is minimal competition in the market, resulting in less development and manufacturing of devices that use these radio channels. Permitting fees and delays make deploying this much-needed technology more costly.

Without greater access to broadband infrastructure, farms may not fully realize the benefits of autonomous machinery, intelligent irrigation, pest management, and livestock health tracking and feeding. These technologies are essential to a farm's ability to stay competitive globally and maximize water and land resources. Access to high-speed Internet services is also critical for farmers and ranchers to follow commodity markets, communicate with customers and suppliers, and access new markets worldwide.

Troy Klinger
Director of Network Operations
Unwired Broadband, LLC.