

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 25, 2016

The Honorable Tom Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

As Members of the Senate Commerce Committee who represent Missouri, predominantly a rural state, we write to emphasize the importance of the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) final rules for the reverse auction of remaining funds available under Phase II of the Connect America Fund (CAF II). It is critically important to us that our rural constituents have the same access to fiber optics and other advanced broadband networks as their urban counterparts.

We understand the FCC is considering rules for the reverse auction of remaining CAF II funds, and there is roughly \$400 million available over the next ten years to bring broadband to unserved parts of Missouri. It is paramount this funding be reserved solely for Missouri. Fiber optics and other advanced technologies are essential to attracting and retaining business in rural areas, and they provide numerous benefits including educational opportunities for schools and libraries, precision agriculture for farmers, and improved standards of living through telehealth applications. We urge the Commission to adopt rules for the reverse auction that enable the deployment of fiber optics and other advanced networks to the greatest number of unserved households, businesses, and farms possible.

Rural areas need access to comparable broadband service as those deployed in urban areas. We are steadfast in our commitment to Missouri, and recognize the economic benefits from CAF II in our state if the reverse auction is implemented responsibly. We strongly urge the Commission to meet its obligation to close the rural-urban divide, and to seize the reverse auction as an opportunity to do so.

Sincerely,



Roy Blunt
United States Senator



Claire McCaskill
United States Senator