

United States Senate

August 22, 2019

The Honorable Ajit Pai,
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Commissioner Pai:

I write today with deep concern about the Federal Communications Commission's NPRM on the "Universal Service Contribution Methodology." This proposal would establish a cap on the overall Universal Service Fund (USF) budget and combine the E-Rate and Rural Health Care programs under a single sub-cap.

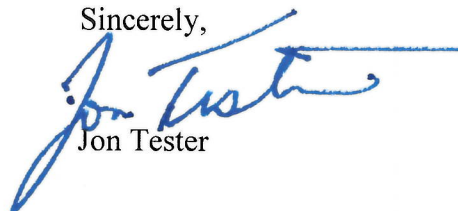
Access to high-speed Internet and reliable cell service are vital to growing economies, staying connected with friends and family, and accessing information during emergencies. For folks living in rural states like Montana, access and reliability are far from a given. Montana communities rely on USF funding to fill in the gaps.

However, I hear from educators and healthcare providers in my state that worry the "Universal Service Contribution Methodology" proposal would force them to compete against each other for funding. I share their concerns about the negative consequences this reform could have on their communities. This proposal reduces resources and increases uncertainty for rural areas.

On numerous occasions throughout your career, you have voiced your desire to close the digital divide. I am deeply troubled this proposal is contrary to that goal and urge you to reconsider.

I appreciate your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Jon Tester