



January 8, 2020

Via ECFS

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Notice of *Ex Parte* Submission of the Fiber Broadband Association, Rural Digital Opportunity Fund, WC Docket Nos. 19-126

Dear Ms. Dortch:

The Fiber Broadband Association (“FBA”) applauds the statements of Chairman Ajit Pai at CES yesterday recognizing the imperative for the U.S. to deploy all-fiber infrastructure across the country, especially to support 5G networks. In placing fiber deployment at the top of his agenda, the Chairman recognizes that this infrastructure is fundamental for our future economic and social growth and for our international competitiveness. Virtually all developed countries are charging ahead to deploy this critical infrastructure. For instance, yesterday, Ofcom launched a review to bring “full fibre” across the United Kingdom. The interim CEO of Ofcom stated that it seeks to adopt a plan that:

will help fuel a full-fibre future for the whole country. We’re removing the remaining roadblocks to investment and supporting competition, so companies can build the networks that will drive the UK into the digital fast lane. Full-fibre broadband is much faster and more reliable. It’s vital that people and businesses everywhere – whether in rural areas, smaller towns or cities – can enjoy these benefits. So we’re making sure companies have the right incentives to accelerate full fibre to every part of the UK.¹

In addition, a recent report from the Center for a New American Security highlighted that “China has invested more heavily in the fiber and physical infrastructure for standalone 5G,” and that “the Chinese government has undertaken significant investments in building up a more robust

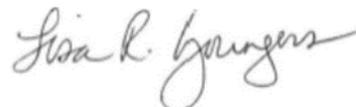
¹ “Ofcom Start Major Review to Boost UK Full Fibre Broadband Market,” ISPreview (Jan. 8, 2020) available at <https://www.ispreview.co.uk/index.php/2020/01/ofcom-start-major-review-to-boost-uk-full-fibre-broadband-market.html>.

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digital infrastructure of fiber optic networks that are important to facilitate the large-scale deployment of 5G.”²

During the entire tenure of Chairman Pai, he has led the way to ensuring our communications infrastructure meets our 21st Century needs, most prominently with his 5G Fast Plan and the numerous orders the Commission has adopted to remove barriers to deployment of wireline infrastructure. The Commission now has an opportunity with the upcoming decision to adopt rules for the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund to ensure rural America shares in this future. FBA has urged the Commission to adjust the auction performance tier weighting methodology to help drive that outcome.³ We look forward to the proposed decision.

This letter is being filed electronically pursuant to Section 1.1206 of the Commission’s rules.⁴



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² “Securing Our 5G Future: The Competitive Challenge and Considerations for U.S. Policy,” Elsa B. Kania, Center for New American Security, at 6-7 (Nov. 2019).

³ See e.g., Comments of the Fiber Broadband Association, WC Docket Nos. 19-126 and 10-90 (Sept. 20, 2019); Reply See Comments of the Fiber Broadband Association, WC Docket Nos. 19-126 and 10-90 (Oct. 21, 2019).

⁴ 47 C.F.R. § 1.1206.