

January 15, 2020

Via ECFS

Marlene J. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
445 - 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20054

**Re: Rural Digital Opportunity Fund, WC Docket No. 19-126;
Connect America Fund, WC Docket No. 10-90**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

This ex parte notification is being submitted under Section 1.1206 of the Commission's rules. On January 14, 2020, the undersigned met with Travis Litman, Chief of Staff and Senior Legal Advisor to Commissioner Rosenworcel about ensuring the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) reverse auction properly incentivizes investment in high-speed networks that will meet the needs of rural communities for decades.

Among its positions and discussion points, NRECA expressed strong support for the decision in the RDOF draft order modifying the bid assignment procedures; beginning in the clearing round, support will be assigned to the bidder whose technology plan has the lowest weight. This decision likely will result in more support being extended to more locations, many of which will be served with future proof, fiber-based networks.

I expressed concern with the aspect of the draft order adding a 50/5 Mbps tier as that performance tier is already less than the median national download speed. As the Commission's Measuring Broadband America report has found, the median download speed among the largest Internet Service Providers was 72 Mbps – as of September 2017.¹ Instead, NRECA has recommended addition of a symmetrical tier of 100/100 Mbps. Failure to properly prioritize highspeed networks well above the Minimum Performance Tier (25/3) will result in "antiquated" networks at the end of the ten-year RDOF funding period. The issue of the need for modifications to the letter of credit was also discussed.

¹ *Eighth Measuring Broadband America Fixed Broadband Report* (available at: <https://www.fcc.gov/reportsresearch/reports/measuring-broadband-america/measuring-fixed-broadband-eighth-report>).

Letter to Marlene Dortch
January 6, 2020

Please contact the undersigned if you have any questions about this submission.

Sincerely,

/s/ Brian M. O'Hara

Senior Director Regulatory Issues – Telecom and Broadband
NRECA

cc: Travis Litman