

May 1, 2017

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 Twelfth Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: *Amendment of Parts 1, 21, 73, 74 and 101 of the Commission's Rules to Facilitate the Provision of Fixed and Mobile Broadband Access, Educational and other Advanced Services in the 2150-2162 and 2500-2690 MHz bands – WT Docket No. 03-66 -*

Dear Ms. Dortch;

I am writing to you on behalf of the Fort Belknap Indian Community (“FBIC”) Council to address the need for broadband services within our community. As you are aware, many rural communities – including various parts of our tribal lands do not have access to fast and reliable broadband services. Unfortunately, this shortage disproportionately impacts Native American Tribes compared to the rest of the country. Broadband access is extremely important and powerful tool that should not be pushed to the side. With our technology-driven world, it is vital to provide all citizens with the resources they need to stay connected to their community and to national and international sources of information.

While there is no complete solution to this problem, a very effective and low cost step is for the FCC to issue new Educational Broadband Service (EBS) licenses in currently unlicensed areas. On June 6, 2014, the National EBS Association, the Catholic Telecommunications Network, the Hispanic Information Telecommunications Network and the Wireless Communications Association International (WCA) submitted a Consensus Proposal to the FCC.

The Fort Belknap Indian Community supports the Consensus Proposal which would allow the FCC to issue one or more new licenses covering FBIC lands. The issuance of new EBS licenses would allow for either direct construction by the Fort Belknap Indian Community and/or leasing of excess capacity to commercial operators who could handle network construction. The availability of fast and reliable Internet services within our community will improve the educational experience of our students, help drive economic development in our rural community and may also generate royalty income to the FBIC.

On behalf of the Fort Belknap Indian Community, I urge the FCC to address the issue that vast areas – more than half of the land area of the U.S. – are not covered by EBS licenses. The Consensus Proposal to issue new licenses is already in place and has been agreed to by many prominent members within the EBS community. We request that the FCC act to facilitate the positive impact these new licenses can have in our community. Issuing new licenses per the Consensus Proposal is the quickest and most cost effective way to promote broadband access in rural America and requires only the reconciliation of FCC rules.

I appreciate your consideration in this matter. Please contact me at 406 353-8309 if you have any questions.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mark L. Azure".

MARK L. AZURE  
President

Xc: FBIC Telecommunications Commission  
FBIC Councilman K. Bigby  
FBIC IT Dept. D. Longknife  
file