

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 8, 2013

The Honorable Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

We write to urge the Federal Communications Commission to consider ways to fully utilize all currently available Connect America Fund (CAF) resources in 2013. Especially in states like Iowa, too few Americans have access to reliable broadband service in their homes and businesses. Such access is critical to economic growth, job creation and global competitiveness.

We are grateful that the FCC has set aside \$600 million for the first phase of this transition, CAF-1. We are concerned, however, about the rules the Commission has put into place concerning the deployment of CAF-1 funds. These rules appear so restrictive that it is difficult for carriers to utilize them to deploy broadband, including in Iowa. There is clear evidence that more flexibility is needed so available funds can be used to expand broadband to consumers and businesses, especially in rural areas.

We agree with the goal the FCC stated in its December 28th Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that the CAF rules should be refined to enable price cap carriers to bring service to unserved and underserved households as quickly as possible. We applaud the FCC for issuing the NPRM, making clear your willingness to reexamine the funding guidelines. In establishing rules, the FCC should ensure enough flexibility that all the funds remaining can and will be allocated.

The ability of rural Americans, like those in our state, to compete in the digital age depends on access to reliable broadband. It is critical for our rural constituents that vital funds set aside for CAF not be lost and that they be utilized as fully as possible for rural broadband deployment.

Sincerely,



Tom Harkin
United States Senator



Charles Grassley
United States Senator