

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1804

June 10, 2011

The Honorable Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
Room 8-C445
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

I write to you regarding the efforts of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to reform the Universal Service Fund (USF) and Inter-carrier compensation (ICC) system. Like you, I support modernizing these programs, including making them more accountable and broadband-focused to meet the goal of providing affordable and comparable communications service to all Americans. However, I am concerned that reform proposals outlined in the recent Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) may hamper both current and future investment in rural communities in Louisiana.

As you well know, there continues to be a need for wireless and other advanced communications services in rural areas of our country. I realize that this is due in part to many factors, including the increased cost of deploying technology to these areas, but would like, where possible, to assist companies looking to build out services in rural areas. Over the last three decades, communications carriers in rural areas have invested millions of dollars in communications networks supported not only by universal service, but also by private investment and Federal telecommunications and broadband incentive programs. Recent reform proposals at the FCC include new program restraints, benchmarks and formulas intended to make universal service more efficient and implement a new Inter-carrier compensation system. I believe that any reforms must protect existing investments, provide predictable support systems for small rural carriers, and promote broadband adoption in rural areas.

In closing, I note that the Telecommunications Act of 1996 mandates that Federal and State governments must work to advance the availability of advanced telecommunications services to all consumers, including those in rural areas, at rates which are comparable to rates charged in urban areas. The USF was established by the FCC to attain these goals promised by the Act. While I strongly support your effort to achieve broadband availability nationwide, USF and ICC reform must not jeopardize current investments or discourage future investments from the private sector or Federal incentive programs.

Page Two
June 10, 2011

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I look forward to working with you to provide opportunities for telecommunications providers, including small rural carriers, to continue service to rural areas throughout our country.

With warmest regards, I am

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Mary L. Landrieu". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "M".

Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator