

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

October 21, 2011

The Honorable Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We write regarding proposals to reform the Universal Service Fund (USF) and the intercarrier compensation (ICC) system that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is currently considering.

In particular, we believe any reform must take into account the impact on small, rural communication providers, like those in Iowa, and their customers – our constituents. It is critical to consider the great strides that so many rural cooperatives and small commercial communications providers have made in using valuable USF and ICC resources to provide outstanding service in remote, hard-to-reach, and high-cost areas of rural America. We should embark on a policy course that builds upon and sustains this successful model rather than dismantles it. Doing anything less will do a disservice to our constituents and will make rural economic development initiatives more difficult.

There is broad agreement regarding the need to reform USF and ICC, but we need to do so in a deliberate and careful way that both promotes broadband service where it is not available today and also does not harm rural customers who already have broadband service. Without access to reasonably comparable broadband service, rural America will fall behind in terms of distance education, telemedicine, and economic development. Today, access to affordable broadband service isn't a luxury – it is fundamental to doing business, educating our children, providing medical care, and protecting our national security. As such, decisions you and your colleagues make today will have dramatic, long-term implications for the quality of life for rural communities.

Many stakeholders have weighed in on this issue, and we encourage the FCC to examine their suggestions and proposals carefully. In so doing, we urge you and your colleagues to evaluate all specific proposals with a focus on achieving the twin goals of both maintaining broadband where it is today and promoting more widespread availability. We hope the commission will reject any USF and ICC reforms that would undermine the availability and affordability of services offered by small rural providers in high-cost areas, and instead will implement reforms

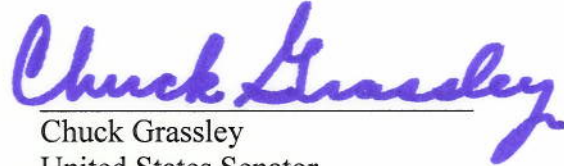
that build upon and sustain the great success so many rural communications providers have had in deploying robust broadband.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to hearing from you.

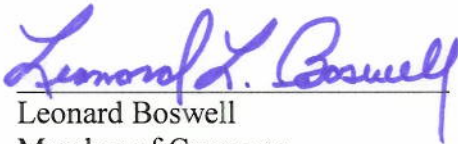
Sincerely,



Tom Harkin
United States Senator



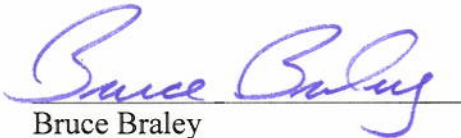
Chuck Grassley
United States Senator



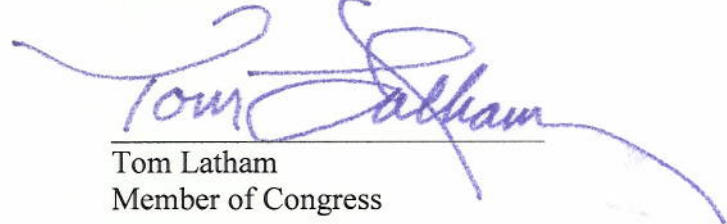
Leonard Boswell
Member of Congress



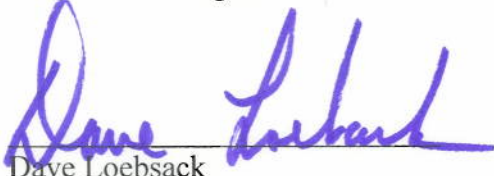
Steve King
Member of Congress



Bruce Braley
Member of Congress



Tom Latham
Member of Congress



Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress

cc: Commissioner Copps
Commissioner McDowell
Commissioner Clyburn