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## **WTA Applauds Letter Signed by 36 Senators to FCC on Rural Call Completion**

**Helena, MT (December 3, 2012)** – The Western Telecommunications Alliance (WTA) praised the efforts of Senator Tim Johnson (SD) and 35 other Senators to encourage the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to aggressively pursue voice service providers who are not completing calls to consumers and businesses in rural America.

The letter urges the FCC to “use all authorized and appropriate enforcement powers to take action against parties found to be engaging in the prohibited activities outlined in the Commission’s [February 2012] Declaratory Ruling.” More specifically, the letter urges the FCC to expedite an “investigation by requiring the originating provider to submit network performance data” if an originating provider is suspected of violating the Declaratory Ruling. The network performance data should include “a detailed analysis of call completion rates.” “Materially greater failure rates than calls to urban areas” should trigger further investigation, including whether or not the provider uses a least-cost router, said the Senators.

“On behalf of the WTA membership, I want to thank Senator Johnson and his colleagues for their leadership on this matter, said Kelly Worthington, WTA’s executive vice president. We are grateful that over a third of the U.S. Senate understands how important this issue is to people who live in rural America. This is a public safety issue, a consumer issue, a business issue, and a health care issue. Because of this problem, families are unable to call one another, rural businesses are losing existing customers as well as potential new business opportunities, and rural citizens are having a very difficult time getting vital health information from health care providers. The lack of calls being completed to rural areas has persisted for far too long and the FCC needs to crack down immediately on those who aren’t completing calls.”

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*Western Telecommunications Alliance represents over 200 rural telecommunications companies providing quality voice, data and video services in rural areas in the 24 states west of the Mississippi River. On average, WTA member companies serve fewer than 3,000 access lines with fewer than 500 customers in each exchange. WTA's members serve some of the most rural and hard-to-serve communities in the country and are on the forefront of bringing 21st Century telecommunications services to rural America. For more information about WTA visit [www.w-t-a.org](http://www.w-t-a.org).*