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**WTA Praises Local Voice Rate Floor Freeze by FCC and  
Supports Elimination of Rate Floor Requirement**

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 18, 2017)** – WTA – Advocates for Rural Broadband supports the Order approved today by the Federal Communications Commission that freezes the local voice rate floor that rural telecommunications providers must charge their customers in order to receive support from the Universal Service Fund. This mandatory minimum often resulted in rural residents paying more for their basic telephone service than residents of urban areas. WTA also looks forward to working with the Commission on the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that was also adopted today that proposes to eliminate the rate floor requirement completely.

“WTA has had concerns about requiring rural carriers to charge their customers a minimum local voice rate in order to receive USF support,” said Derrick Owens, WTA’s Vice President of Government Affairs. “We also have had objections to the mechanism that was developed to implement the rate floor. In all, it was a flawed concept and not well implemented. We’re pleased to see Chairman Pai and his fellow Commissioners halt any additional rate increases and look forward to working with the Commission on the Proposed Rule, which contemplates ending the rate floor entirely. Doing so would reduce regulatory burdens on small carriers, costs for their customers, and work for the regulatory agencies.”

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*WTA represents more than 325 small, rural telecommunications carriers providing voice, broadband and video-related services in the United States. 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. To learn more about WTA, visit [www.w-t-a.org](http://www.w-t-a.org).*