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Contact: Eric Keber  
202-548-0202, eric@w-t-a.org

WTA Applauds Elimination of QRA and Reinstatement of Safety Net Additive Support

WASHINGTON, D.C. (April 23, 2014) – WTA – Advocates for Rural Broadband applauds the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC's) unanimous decision today to eliminate the quantile regression analysis (QRA), which had been used to unpredictably cap and cut Universal Service Fund support to rural local exchange carriers (RLECs).

“We’re pleased to see that the FCC has moved forward with Chairman Wheeler’s December commitment to do away with the QRA,” said Derrick Owens, WTA’s Vice President of Government Affairs. “The unpredictability it caused among our member companies was resulting in reduced investment in broadband in rural America. We’re grateful that so many in Congress and at the Commission saw the harmful effects the QRA had on rural America.”

WTA also supports the changes in regards to Safety Net Additive (SNA) support. In the 2011 USF-ICC Transformation Order, SNA was retroactively eliminated, even for those carriers that had been promised that support in return for making large broadband investments due to economic stimulus awards and other factors.

“We’re pleased that the FCC has recognized that RLECs that took stimulus awards and made other investments in broadband shouldn’t be penalized for that investment,” said Owens. “We also look forward to seeing the text of the FNPRM and working with the FCC to implement a Connect America Fund for RLECs that encourages broadband build out and protects the incredible gains rural broadband providers have made over the years in response to their customers’ growing broadband demands.”

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WTA represents more than 250 small, rural telecommunications carriers providing voice, video and data 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.