



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**WTA Applauds and Supports Introduction of
Universal Service Fund Contributions Modernization Legislation**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May, 5 2020) – WTA – Advocates for Rural Broadband applauds Representatives Collin Peterson (D-MN) and Don Young (R-AK) for introducing bipartisan legislation to modernize the contributions mechanism for the Universal Service Fund (USF).

The USF is funded by contributions based on the long-distance and international voice revenues of telecommunications carriers, who then pass those fees on to their voice customers. As those revenues decline, the contributions factor has risen above 21%, up from 12% just ten years ago, in order to meet the demands of building a robust broadband network. The *Universal Broadband Act* would require the Federal Communications Commission to begin assessing broadband Internet access services for contributions to USF, while exempting consumers who are making use of the Lifeline Program.

“This legislation is long-overdue, and we support it,” said Derrick Owens, Senior Vice President of Government & Industry Affairs for WTA. “As we’ve seen during this pandemic, the ability to have access to affordable broadband at home is critical. USF helps with both network construction and affordability. We appreciate Reps. Peterson and Young taking the bold step to modernize the fund. All four USF program are focused on broadband; it makes no sense to solely assess long distance telephone revenues for contributions. If Congress were designing USF today, it would never structure it the way it is currently structured. The *Universal Broadband Act* would fund USF consistent with the services being offered in the 21st Century.”

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WTA – Advocates for Rural Broadband is a national trade association that represents more than 340 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.