



February 1, 2012

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Ranking Minority Member
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman, Subcommittee on
Communications and Technology
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2182 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Anna Eshoo
Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee
on Communications and Technology
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
205 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Upton and Walden and Ranking Minority Members Waxman and Eshoo:

This letter is sent on behalf of the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association (“NTCA”) to applaud the efforts of the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology in reporting H.R. 3309 to the full Energy and House Commerce Committee. This bill provides a welcome platform for debate of an important topic – the processes by which the Federal Communications Commission (the “Commission”) ultimately reaches decisions that affect vital communications services upon which all Americans depend.

As a representative of hundreds of small, community-based communications providers who operate in high-cost rural areas long ago left behind by other providers, NTCA welcomes a dialogue on how best to ensure that communications policy is developed through procedures that take full and fair account of every stakeholder’s voice, regardless of size. Transparency and regulatory certainty are certainly important to every telecom industry participant, but they are essential for small, rural network operators who must make significant, long-term investment decisions in hard-to-serve reaches of the country. H.R. 3309 sets forth a number of common sense proposals that can help to provide greater visibility into agency rulemaking.

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The decisions made by the Commission are of critical importance to small providers who carry out the congressional mission of universal service for consumers in high-cost rural areas. NTCA thanks the Subcommittee for its thorough examination of the ways in which the Commission's decision-making process might be improved and enhanced, and we look forward to working with the full Committee to ensure that such process reforms can promote regulatory certainty and rational, transparent decision-making.

Sincerely,

Thomas Wacker

Vice President – Government Affairs