

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 14, 2017

The Honorable Ajit Pai  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street Southwest  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

We encourage the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to accelerate the deployment of advanced networks to all Americans. However, we have concerns that the Commission will vote on an item this week that could harm consumers. It is critical that as we work to enhance networks across the country, we protect existing service for consumers during and after technology transitions.

As currently drafted, the *Accelerating Wireline Broadband Deployment by Removing Barriers to Infrastructure and Investment* Report and Order lessens notifications to consumers about changes to their landline service (virtually eliminating advance notice of copper retirement to retail customers), eliminates the "de facto" retirement rule, and changes the definition of "service" to reduce access to critical communications for consumers in an attempt to lessen regulatory barriers on phone service providers. These changes cause serious concern for rural Americans including the elderly, low-income, and consumers living with disabilities who rely on landline phone service.

As you know, millions of people and businesses, not to mention critical U.S. government operations, across the nation rely on legacy landline phone service. Individuals in rural America, particularly those living where cell phone service is poor, utilize these landlines to conduct business, reach emergency responders, and stay in touch with loved ones. Households and businesses in our states, and across the country, cannot afford the disruption of having service altered without adequate advance notice, the assurance that an equivalent replacement exists, and a clear understanding of how to obtain and use the replacement.

Furthermore, this order would affect more than landline phone service. Alarm systems, fax machines, and medical monitoring devices frequently depend on access to landline service. DSL broadband service also relies on landline phone service. If phone lines are not maintained, all of these services could be put in jeopardy. We need a reliable service standard in place to ensure that services people depend on will continue to work, and that rural Americans will not be left behind during this technology upgrade, furthering the digital divide.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We hope to work with you to further advance the benefits of next generation technology to all Americans.

Sincerely,



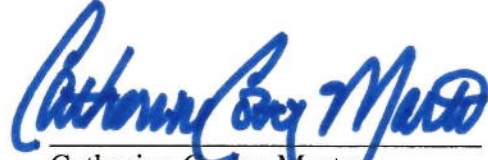
Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



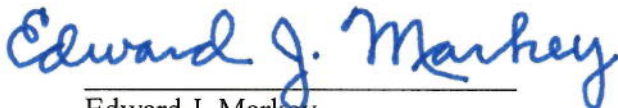
Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



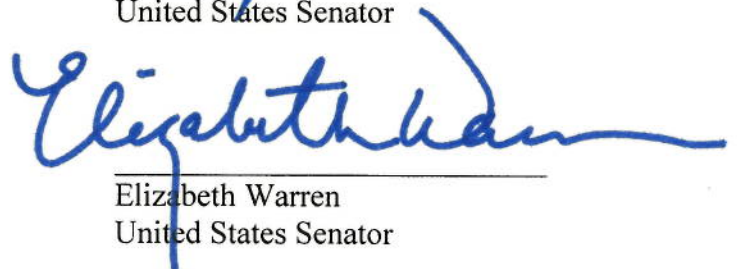
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Bernard Sanders  
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United States Senator