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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-0502

August 4, 2015

Hon. Tom Wheeler, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> St., SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

I write in strong support of your proposal to ensure consumers are protected as copper networks are retired and replaced by next-generation networks. I also urge your colleagues to support this important proposal, which will provide a backstop for my constituents, who have had their health, safety, and livelihood compromised by the neglect of copper networks.

The retirement of copper networks by neglect—often referred to as *de facto* retirement—can have devastating impacts on communities, particularly those in rural America. Telecommunications providers that fail to properly maintain copper networks put the health and safety of consumers at great risk, which can be compounded in the event of natural disasters or severe weather. I submit for your review examples shared with me from the Broadband Alliance of Mendocino, which, like other consortiums in Northern California, have carefully documented the long-term neglect of copper networks and are therefore supportive of strong consumer safeguards moving forward.

In implementing your proposal, I ask that the FCC be responsive to consumers that find their service has been discontinued, reduced, or impaired with the installation of next-generation networks. I also ask that you proactively ensure telecommunications providers replacing copper networks offer rates, terms, and conditions that are comparable to legacy service. Notification alone is not a sufficient safeguard. Consumers must have proper recourse to ensure these critical lifelines are well-maintained and accessible.

Thank you for your work in expanding high-speed connectivity to rural America, and in protecting consumers as next-generation networks are deployed. I look forward to the FCC's continued attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

  
Jared Huffman

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