

Senator James E. Risch
483 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Risch:

I am a customer of Mud Lake Telephone, a small rural telecommunications company located in Dubois, Idaho. Being a community-based communications provider, Mud Lake Telephone strives to provide high-quality, affordable service to their customers-your constituents.

Many small businesses in my community depend on access to affordable, quality broadband service to serve their customers, to remain competitive with businesses in more urban areas and from around the world, and to expand our business to new markets and customers. Without the deployment of broadband with robust speeds, I fear our rural community will fall behind in terms of economic development, educational opportunities, advances in health care, and quality of life.

The recent FCC Order on the matter of broadband build out along with the potential further reform of the Universal Service Fund and related Intercarrier Compensation mechanisms raise a concern. Our small rural telephone coop has relied on these to bring new technology in for their customers while keeping services affordable. The recent order, together with a further notice of rulemaking the FCC has issued, threatens to eliminate incentives and opportunities for rural telecom companies to maintain or continue building new services.

That's why I am extremely concerned with the FCC's National Broadband Plan. The plan will have serious negative consequences for consumers living in rural America by creating a digital divide by calling for broadband speeds of 100mbps to 100 million homes in urban areas while only supporting 4 mbps to rural areas through the Connect America Fund.

This large disparity is unacceptable, and I urge you to contact the FCC to tell them so. Quality broadband service is fundamental to sustaining and bringing high-paying jobs to our rural communities, and the FCC plan should not undercut the investment and commitment Mud Lake Telephone has already made to deploy broadband service to your constituents.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,