



November 25, 2020

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
S-128 The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Vice Chairman, Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
S-146A The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Kennedy  
Chairman, FSGG Subcommittee  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
S-128 The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chris Coons  
Ranking Member, FSGG Subcommittee  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
S-146A The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairman Kennedy, and Ranking Member Coons:

As communications companies serving Americans in rural and otherwise underserved areas, we take national security issues seriously and wish to comply with the bipartisan direction that any equipment deemed to pose security threats should be removed from carrier networks in the United States. We respectfully request your immediate assistance in providing the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") with sufficient appropriations to fund the Secure and Trusted Communication Networks Reimbursement Program ("STCNRP") to accomplish that objective.

Our companies provide critical communications services in hard-to-serve areas, employ skilled workers in our local communities, and help drive the modern economic engine of rural America by providing services that have proven to be absolutely critical as even more aspects of life have shifted online amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Network security is paramount to our commitments to serving our customers and neighbors, but absent access to the STCNRP, our very existence is threatened. Failure to sufficiently fund the program to replace equipment now deemed unacceptable by federal policymakers may result in our companies being forced to shutter our networks and a termination of connectivity to our customers, many of whom do not have an alternative to our service. This outcome would devastate many rural areas and exacerbate the digital divide.

Congress recognized the need to secure communications networks by creating the STCNRP as part of the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act of 2019 ("STCNA"), which was signed into law on March 12, 2020. Since that time, on September 4, 2020, the FCC has reported that, "it could cost an estimated \$1.837 billion to remove and replace Huawei and ZTE equipment" from the networks of all Eligible Telecommunications Carriers, or their affiliates and subsidiaries, and an, "approximately \$1.617 billion to remove and replace such equipment" from entities that "appear to initially qualify for reimbursement" under STCNA. Our operations have been frozen with uncertainty as we wait for critical funding to remove and replace equipment deemed to pose a national security threat. As you consider appropriations for Fiscal Year 2021, we depend on Congress to make funding available as soon as possible so that we can continue to provide essential broadband services in rural America.

We thank you for support of our efforts to keep America's communications networks safe and secure and to close the digital divide.

Sincerely,

Michael T. Prior  
Chief Executive Officer  
ATN International

Jonathan D. Foxman  
President/CEO  
MTPCS, LLC d.b.a. CellularOne

Ryan Johnson  
Chief Operating Officer  
Missouri RSA 5 Partnership  
d/b/a Chariton Valley Wireless  
Services

Bruce Holdridge  
CEO  
Copper Valley Telecom

James Groft  
CEO  
James Valley  
Telecommunications

Jim Lyon  
CEO and GM  
Mark Twain Rural Telephone  
Company

John C. Nettles  
President  
Pine Belt Cellular, Inc d/b/a Pine  
Belt Wireless

Jerry Whisenhunt  
General Manager  
Pine Cellular

Jana Wallace  
Chief Executive Officer  
PTCI

Mike Kilgore  
CEO  
Sagebrush Cellular Inc.

Craig Gates  
General Manager/CEO  
Triangle Communications  
System, Inc.

Eric Woody  
CTO  
Union Telephone Company DBA  
Union Wireless

Todd Houseman  
General Manager/CEO  
United Wireless  
Communications, Inc.

Frank DiRico  
CEO  
NE Colorado Cellular, Inc., d/b/a  
Viaero Wireless

Cc:

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
The Honorable Roger Wicker  
The Honorable Maria Cantwell