



Federal Communications Commission
Attn: Commissioner Clyburn

November 28, 2016

Re: #Solutions2020 Policy Forum Pitch

Dear Commissioner Clyburn,

Thank you for the opportunity to present to this year's #Solutions2020 event. It was a pleasure to be in a room focused on solutions and concrete steps to improve the lives of people across the country. The following outlines proposals for #Solutions2020:

First, it is important that policymakers from all corners of America understand that over 59M Americans live in rural America. Another 28.8M Americans live in small, incorporated communities like mine in Columbia Falls Montana. That brings to almost 90M the number of Americans living in rural and small towns across the country.

Second, communications policies must reflect the reality that those of us living in rural and small towns are diverse; our economies aren't just about farming anymore. We represent entrepreneurs and innovators of all kinds, including tech companies like the one I founded in northwest Montana. As such, we are as dependent on both the wireless and wired capabilities available to our urban neighbors as any 21st century Americans.

Third, many rural and small town locations still have infrastructure deployment challenges that need to be addressed before our adoption rates can increase. Indeed, without the infrastructure, it is difficult to focus on adoption.

Fourth, we need more middle mile and greater flexibility in FCC support programs to bring services beyond anchor institutions and further into homes located in remote locations. These solutions may rely on hybridized wireless and wired technologies due to distance. These solutions must ensure that the resulting services are comparable in price and quality to those offered in our urban communities.

Fifth, Rural and small towns benefit from innovations that often begin in our urban solutions. For example, national pricing of wireless services and zero rating opportunities have both been hugely positive in rural and small town locations.



Lastly, we may need a bigger table to ensure that rural and small town thought leaders have the opportunity to give input on the important matters of broadband deployment and adoption.

There is perhaps no greater challenge for rural and small town America than broadband availability and accessibility.

Thank you again for considering these perspectives.

/s/

Diane Smith
CEO
406-250-4328