Dear State Commission Partner:

I am writing to you in light of the approaching end of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). The ACP is the largest broadband affordability program in our Nation’s history. In just over two years, the ACP grew to serve over 23 million households—more than one in six nationwide—across rural, suburban, and urban America. However, the households that have come to depend on this program will no longer be able to do so after the end of this month when, absent additional funding from Congress, the program will cease.

Unless Congress acts, ACP households will need to make tough choices about what expenses they may need to cut if they want to maintain their internet service. A recent survey revealed that losing the ACP benefit may force up to 77 percent of participating households to change their plan or drop internet service entirely. Moreover, disruptions in service will make it harder for ACP households to search for jobs, complete homework, and access telehealth services.

State public utility commissions have been trusted partners in promoting the ACP since its launch. But this kind of partnership is not new. For the last 40 years you have worked with the Commission to promote the Lifeline program, including our annual collaboration with the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners and the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates on Lifeline Awareness Week. At their core, both the ACP and the Lifeline program are tools for keeping households connected to their families and their communities.

To this end, the Lifeline program’s $9.25 monthly benefit ($34.25 monthly for households on qualifying Tribal lands) can provide some relief to ACP households that may struggle to afford broadband after the ACP ends. At present, approximately 7.6 million households are currently enrolled in the Lifeline program. While not all of the more than 23 million ACP households will qualify for Lifeline under the law, some ACP households not presently participating in Lifeline may be eligible for the program.

I hope you can help raise awareness of the Lifeline program at this critical time. We have developed a number of resources for our state partners that you might find useful: https://www.usac.org/lifeline/resources/state-and-federal-partners/. In addition, the Commission is available to provide training with respect to the Lifeline program and its enrollment process. To request training, please email Outreach@fcc.gov for assistance. I am also enclosing with this
letter state-by-state ACP and Lifeline enrollment data and a fact sheet outlining the differences between Lifeline and the ACP, which may be a useful tool for discussions with households and organizations that have relied on this program.

I appreciate your assistance helping ACP households navigate this transition.

Sincerely,

Trent B. Harkrader