

February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025

The Honorable Brendan Carr  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
45 L Street NE  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Rip and Replace Funding Disbursement

Dear Chairman Carr,

I write to you on a pressing reimbursement issue that directly impacts communications carriers across Wyoming. In 2019, due to national security threats of Huawei and ZTE equipment in America's telecommunications networks, Congress passed laws<sup>1</sup> that prohibited companies from using such equipment and later banned the import of new equipment. To help American companies that had already invested in Huawei and ZTE equipment, Congress obligated initial funds of \$1.9 billion to remove and replace the affected equipment with approved hardware.

However, the initial \$1.9 billion funding fell far short of the nearly \$5 billion required to legally remove and replace the affected equipment with approved hardware. Therefore, small network operators in Wyoming and throughout rural America were faced with difficult choices about the future of their services. In 2024, Congress passed legislation to fully fund this "Rip and Replace" process with an additional \$3.08 billion through the Federal Communications Commission's Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Reimbursement Program as part of the 2025 National Defense Authorization Act. Fully funding the "Rip and Replace" program ensures small wireless and broadband carriers throughout the country will not be saddled with millions of dollars in costs that could result in service blackouts and disruptions to Americans. This is especially important to states like Wyoming, where poor telecommunications connectivity continues to be one of the state's biggest challenges. With the new funding, telecommunications companies will now have the ability to not only ensure the rural areas of Wyoming have reliable access but also that our communications systems are protected from foreign adversaries.

Given the significance of the issue and its impact on carrier access in states like Wyoming, I am requesting an expedited review and disbursement of funds for this program. The swift and proper disbursement of these funds to affected operators are crucial to the economic vitality of these regions and for national economic security. The stakes are particularly high for small wireless and broadband carriers such as those in Wyoming who face substantial costs in implementing these necessary security upgrades.

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<sup>1</sup> 47 U.S.C § 1601

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## United States Senate

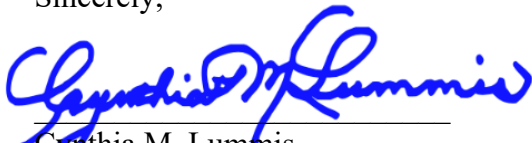
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These carriers cannot bear the financial burden of equipment replacement without causing service disruptions or possible business closures, which would severely impact local communities' access to essential communications services.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent matter. Swift action on funding distributions will help protect our telecommunications infrastructure while ensuring continuous service for all Americans.

Sincerely,



Cynthia M. Lummis  
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable Howard Lutnick  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20230