



U.S. Chamber of Commerce



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THE BROADBAND ASSOCIATION

March 15, 2022

BY ELECTRONIC FILING

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street NE
Washington, DC 20554

RE: *Ex parte* Letter in *Establishing Emergency Connectivity Fund to Close the Homework Gap*, WC Docket No. 21-93.

Dear Ms. Dortch:

The undersigned associations write today to thank the Commission for its recent action to grant, in part, the Petition for Waiver from the Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition et al. to extend certain deadlines related to administration of the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF). The ECF has provided critical resources for students and library patrons during the past year and we commend the work of the Commission and the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) to help schools and libraries address the homework gap by implementing this program during the pandemic. We urge the Commission to build on this important decision by granting additional requests from the SHLB petition, particularly opening a third application filing window and extending the limited waiver of the gift rule.

We strongly support opening a third application window to provide a timely process to allocate remaining surplus funding in the ECF, which has already been appropriated by Congress. Based on applications received by the Commission, the ECF has a surplus of approximately \$800 million available for critically needed additional support. Additional funds may be available based on application cancelations and denials. Schools and libraries continue to engage in online instruction, and a third application window would provide the opportunity to put the resources Congress intended to good use. Additionally, some schools and libraries that missed the opportunity of the two previous rounds of funding due to a lack of familiarity would be able to apply, thereby extending the reach of this important program.

Further, we urge the Commission to extend the limited waiver of the gift rule that accompanied the ECF Order to coincide with the new deadline of June 30, 2023 to allow for continued delivery of connection devices as well as for other purposes. In each case, the Commission should proceed in a timely and efficient manner to ensure that service and device

funding reaches students and patrons as soon as possible, within the requisite program integrity guidelines.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to continuing to work with you on this and related matters.

Respectfully submitted,

By:
Information Technology Industry Council (ITI)
CCA
INCOMPAS
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
USTelecom

cc:
Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel
Commissioner Brendan Carr
Commissioner Geoffrey Starks
Commissioner Nathan Simington