

NATIONAL TRIBAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

September 17, 2019

I. USF Funding Cap

- A. NTTA signed the Joint Statement filed by the Schools, Health & Libraries (SHLB) Coalition opposing the overall USF cap proposal
- B. NTTA comments filed:
 - The digital divide between, measured in terms of broadband availability rural Tribal areas and the rest of the country still exists: as of 12/31/2017, 93.4% of the United States had access to 25/3 Mbps fixed and 5/1 Mbps mobile broadband services, compared to 41.3% of rural Tribal areas in the lower 48 states.
 - Broadband availability data for Tribal areas is unreliable: see e.g., GAO Report 18-630 “*FCC Data Overstate Access on Tribal Lands*”
 - Affordability is also a key consideration – Lifeline considerations such as the enhanced Tribal Lifeline credit for broadband service
 - An overall USF cap would ensure inter-program conflict once the cap is reached and funding has to be prioritized
 - Contributions reform should instead be undertaken

II. RAY BAUM’S Act Implementation

- A. Requires evaluation of broadband availability in Tribal areas (Section 508) and how unserved areas will be addressed
- B. CGB, WTB, and WCB issued initial report in May 2019
- C. FCC proceeding to address unserved areas to be completed by September 23, 2020
- D. Main issues: Tribal consultation, mapping, USF support, affordability
- E. NTTA’s Tribal Area Solution for Universal Service Support

III. Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF)

- A. Competitive auction for price cap carrier CAF Phase II support
 - \$20.4 billion in support to be made available over ten years
- B. Eligible areas are those census blocks where 25/3 Mbps service is not available at all (Phase I) or to specific locations (Phase II).
- C. Paragraph 11 states specifically mentions deployment on Tribal lands.
- D. Potential to provide Tribally-owned companies a right of first refusal or filing priority for RDOF support targeted to Tribal census blocks (similar to EBS spectrum Tribal priority window)

IV. 2.5 GHz/Education Broadband Service Spectrum

- A. Tribal Priority Filing Window next steps
- B. Tribal entity interest