



Filed Via ECFS

Ex Parte

November 1, 2021

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

Re: In the Matter of Lifeline and Linkup Reform Modernization, WC Docket No. 11-42

Dear Ms. Dortch:

The National Tribal Telecommunications Association (NTTA) echoes the concerns expressed by NTCA – The Rural Broadband Association (October 18, 2021 Ex Parte) and USTelecom (October 21, 2021 Ex Parte) regarding the impending phase-out of the standalone voice service Lifeline credit. Effective December 1, 2021, standalone voice service subscribers will no longer receive a Lifeline credit, currently \$5.25 per month, and will at that date begin paying the full rate for basic local service.

As NTCA states, “voice service remains critical for many low-income and older individuals who rely on such service as an affordable method of contacting health care providers, government agencies, and public safety.” This is especially true in Tribal areas, where many Tribal elderly do not use broadband service to connect to the world, but rather rely on basic local, standalone, voice service. With many of these elderly Native Americans on fixed incomes, their connection is at risk unless more funds can be found to pay for the increased charge previously covered by the federal Lifeline program. Nothing about these vulnerable Native Americans has changed, other than the elimination of vital support for their connection to the outside world, including emergency and health care services.

NTTA urges the Commission to consider delaying the December 1, 2021 effective date of the standalone voice service Lifeline credit elimination on an expeditious basis to protect some of the most vulnerable Americans, including many in Tribal areas, from potentially losing their connections to the world.

Sincerely,

Godfrey Enjady
President