

United States Senate

May 24, 2018

COMMITTEES:
BANKING, HOUSING, AND
URBAN AFFAIRS
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS
HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
AGING

The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

I understand that given the role pole attachments play in broadband deployment projects, the Commission is currently reviewing its pole attachment rules, including consideration of “One Touch Make Ready” (OTMR) proposals. The OTMR would allow companies seeking to add equipment to a utility pole to move the pre-existing equipment of telephone, cable, and utility companies already on the pole.

While I recognize that streamlining pole attachment make-ready processes can be beneficial, I urge the Commission to ensure a clear approach regarding the OTMR proposed policy changes. These attachments are crucial to rural broadband growth. Access to high-speed broadband is essential to the quality of life for all American citizens. Such access provides for global competitiveness, a growing job market and educational opportunity. These proposed changes directly affect among other things: public and worker safety, job growth and existing collective bargaining agreements involving Communications Workers of America (CWA) members in my home state of Alabama.

I recognize that streamlining pole attachment make-ready processes sounds like a good idea, but the unintended consequences of a process that bypasses skilled workers could threaten worker safety and disrupt service to consumers. I urge the Commission to ensure that any make-ready policy that it adopts include safeguards that would protect the safety of workers and the public and minimize disruptions in service to consumers.

Existing attachers are in the best position to reduce customer outages and they have the skilled, trained workforce that is necessary to ensure that make-ready work is done properly and safely. Much of this work is being done by career employees with health and retirement benefits. These are important jobs. Accordingly, any new rules should ensure that existing attachers are able to maintain control over who is permitted to move their facilities.

In closing, I urge the Commission to review the issues aforementioned that directly affect my constituents and their respective communities –both urban cities and rural Alabama.

Sincerely,



Doug Jones
United States Senator