

NECA's Weekly Federal Regulatory Summary

[USF Reform](#) [Open Internet](#) [Broadband](#) [Robocalls](#) [USF](#) [Call Completion](#) [Misc.](#) [Upcoming Events](#)

March 2, 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

- The FCC adopted seven items at its February 28, 2020 [Open Meeting](#), including a [public notice](#) on establishing auction application and competitive bidding procedures for Phase I of the RDOF, and an [NPRM](#) on changes to the white space device rules to provide improved broadband coverage in rural and underserved areas.
- The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau [seeks comment](#) on a population distribution methodology for estimating the number of Alaskans who receive mobile service within census blocks in remote areas. Comments are due March 26, 2020; reply comments are due April 10, 2020.
- The Office of Economics and Analytics [seeks comment](#) on the state of competition in the communications marketplace for its second marketplace report. Comments are due April 13, 2020; replies are due May 13, 2020.
- The USDA [announced](#) it has invested \$9.1 million in high-speed broadband infrastructure in South Carolina, \$2.3 million in [Nevada](#), \$3.3 million in [Montana](#), \$19 million in [Texas](#), and \$28 million in [Virginia](#). The funding is through the [USDA's ReConnect Program](#).
- Nine senators [asked](#) the USDA to allow rural communities that lack high-speed broadband - but have received FCC funding for satellite service – to be eligible for ReConnect funding.
- [NTCA](#) and [INCOMPAS](#) filed replies on [INCOMPAS's](#) petition for reconsideration of the DODC [order](#).
- NTCA [provided](#) estimates on 8YY access revenues. USTelecom [offered](#) a proposal on 8YY access charge reform.
- Comments [are due](#) March 11, 2020, on recommendations [approved](#) by the North American Numbering Council on funding of the creation costs and on the fee structure for the reassigned numbers database.
- [Comments were filed](#) on the [NPRM](#) on establishing a process for the registration of a single consortium that conducts private-led efforts to trace back the origin of suspected unlawful robocalls. Replies are due March 2, 2020. [Reply comments were filed](#) on the FCC's first staff report on call blocking.
- [Inteliquent](#) and [T-Mobile](#) filed replies on [their motions](#) that sought dismissal of plaintiffs' [complaint](#) alleging T-Mobile's provision of false ring tones resulted in lost opportunities to seek intercarrier compensation. Inteliquent also filed a [reply](#) in support of its [motion](#) for primary jurisdiction referral.
- The Wireline Competition Bureau and OEA [announced](#) the [opening](#) of a [portal](#) for ETCs to report on supply chain information, as required by the 2019 [order](#). The deadline for reporting is April 22, 2020.
- The Senate Commerce Committee will hold a [hearing](#) on 5G supply chain security on March 4, 2020. The Senate [passed a bill](#) that prohibits the use of federal funds administered by the FCC to purchase communications equipment or services from any company that poses a national security risk. The bill awaits approval by President Trump.

Other Key Upcoming Dates

- Mar. 4 - Comments [due](#) on NECA's [proposed average schedule formulas](#). Replies are due March 19, 2020.

USF Reform

- The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau issued a [public notice](#) on February 25, 2020, proposing and seeking comment on a population distribution methodology for estimating the number of Alaskans who receive mobile service within census blocks in remote areas. The Bureau proposes to use this methodology to determine whether mobile service providers participating in the Alaska Plan have met their performance commitments through deployment in eligible census blocks. Comments are due March 26, 2020; reply comments are due April 10, 2020.
- The California Public Utilities Commission [met with](#) Rural Broadband Auction Task Force and Wireline Competition Bureau staff on February 20, 2020, to discuss the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund. The CPUC said a minimum RDOF bidding area should be at the census block group level, rather than the census tract level. It also asked if further clarification could be issued by FCC in its auction procedures as to the eligibility, for RDOF funding, of areas that have received funding from state broadband programs, among other things.
- WISPA filed a [letter](#) on February 24, 2020, on the question in the draft [public notice](#) on the RDOF auction application and competitive bidding procedures that seeks comment on “making available to bidders the lowest T+L weight of any bid for each area in which there were 2 or more bids at the round’s clock percentage.” WISPA claimed this information would serve the public interest by enabling bidders to have greater flexibility to bid for areas that might otherwise not receive support, facilitating more ubiquitous broadband deployment.
- SpaceX [met with](#) advisors to Chairman Pai and Commissioner Carr on February 20 and 21, 2020, to express concern with the draft [public notice](#) on the RDOF pre-and post-auction application and competitive bidding procedures. SpaceX claimed the potential prohibitions on any satellite operator, including any operator of a low earth orbit satellite system, from bidding as low-latency services or from bidding in higher speed performance tiers could harm competition, and ultimately could lead to fewer choices for consumers.
- Alaska Communications [met with](#) Wireline Competition Bureau staff on February 19, 2020, to discuss its CAF Phase II obligations. It requested the Bureau act on its December 4, 2019 request to instruct CostQuest to analyze certain census blocks where Alaska Communications deployed CAF II-qualifying services to residents of Hope, Alaska, and confirm these census blocks are high-cost or extremely high-cost census blocks. Alaska Communications also requested approval of its February 2020 [petition](#) for waiver of the year-end 2019 CAF II location reporting deadline.
- Objections and comments were filed on February 27, 2020, on the public release of Mobility Fund II broadband coverage data that were submitted pursuant to the MF II challenge process [order](#). [AT&T](#) objected to the public release of its MF-II data and asserted there is nothing to prevent a competitor from taking AT&T Mobility’s data out of context and using it against AT&T Mobility in marketing campaigns. [Verizon](#) does not object to the release of its map data, but said the FCC should make clear the map reflects a unique definition of coverage that Verizon does not use in the normal course of business and was prescribed by the Commission for the sole purpose of identifying areas eligible for MF-II support. [T-Mobile](#) said it does not object to the release of its coverage maps but asserted the RDTF lacks the legal authority to overrule a Commission decision designating the information as confidential. It also said release of the MF-II maps reflecting two-year-old coverage data has minimal public value. The [Vermont DPS](#) supported the public release of MF-II coverage data and said challengers will be able to effectively identify areas of the state in need of mobile broadband coverage at a more granular level, and will assist the Commission in achieving its top priority of bridging the digital divide. [public notice](#)
- ATN International [met with](#) Wireline Competition Bureau, Rural Broadband Auctions Task Force, and Office of Economics and Analytics staff on February 20, 2020, to discuss the 5G Fund. ATN discussed the challenges that carriers face to bring mobile technology to rural America and urged the Commission to move as expeditiously as possible to roll out the 5G Fund to avoid broadening the digital divide. It suggested the Commission make 5G Fund support available in areas that are identified

as rural, and said the Commission can draw upon the lessons learned in the Mobility Fund Phase II proceeding to help ensure the success of the 5G Fund.

[Back to Highlights](#)

ICC

- NTCA filed a [letter](#) on February 24, 2020, to address questions raised in a recent [meeting](#) with FCC staff on 8YY access charges. NTCA said in that meeting it highlighted issues faced by smaller incumbent RLECs arising out of any potential transition of access charges for 8YY traffic to bill-and-keep. NTCA submitted estimated ICC revenues for the RLEC community for the period of July 2019 through June 2020. It said RLECs' total originating 8YY access revenues will be approximately \$30.3 million; and of this total for originating 8YY traffic, approximately \$23.8 million will be interstate, and the remaining \$6.5 million will be intrastate. NTCA also said originating 8YY revenues will represent approximately 18% of total access revenues.
- USTelecom filed a [letter](#) on February 25, 2020, offering a proposal on 8YY access charges. USTelecom said it proposes a transition path to ensuring rates are set efficiently to cover legitimate costs, but not to provide incentive or opportunity for arbitrage. USTelecom proposes to: transition end office access charges to bill-and-keep; replace existing tandem switching and usage-based transport charges with a new, single uniform low charge for tandem services; create a transition to a uniform, low database query rate; and allow for reasonable recovery of revenues consistent with the principles of no flash cuts in the USF/ICC Transformation Order. USTelecom proposed that rate of return carriers should be permitted to recover revenues lost due to the 8YY access reforms through CAF ICC support.
- JSI, on behalf of Inter-Community Telephone, filed a [supplement](#) on February 21, 2020, to ICTC's [petition](#) for a waiver of certain Part 51 rules to recalculate the rate bands and charges for local switching, tandem switching and dedicated transport services for two commonly owned study areas in North Dakota, ICTC and Absaraka Cooperative Telephone. JSI said the supplement clarifies Absaraka will become a cost company upon grant of the petition, and that it does not seek waiver of section 69.605(c) of the rules to change from a cost company to an average schedule company.
- NTCA, Frontier, WTA, Windstream, ERTA, and NECA filed a [letter](#) on February 27, 2020, withdrawing their July 2014 [petition](#) that sought a waiver of the application of section 51.913(a) and a pause in any reductions in intercarrier compensation rates for originating intrastate toll VoIP traffic, effective June 30, 2014, until full implementation of the CAF Phase II mechanism for price cap carriers and a tailored CAF mechanism for rural, rate-of-return carriers.
- TrioTel Communications and Consortia Consulting filed a [letter](#) on February 26, 2020, to supplement TrioTel's [petition](#) for waiver of certain Part 51 to modify 2011 Base Period Revenue in connection with the merger of affiliated study areas in South Dakota. TrioTel said the combined companies will file a cost study for traffic sensitive settlements for January 2020 through June 2020, and in July 2020 it is planning to elect BDS and the need for a cost study will be eliminated. It also said that given the initial requested date for merger has passed, it requested the merger become effective July 1, 2020 to aid in the transition.

[Back to Highlights](#)

Broadband

- The Office of Economics and Analytics issued a [public notice](#) on February 27, 2020, seeking comment on the state of competition in the communications marketplace for its second communications marketplace report. On February 20, 2020, the OEA [updated](#) certain figures, maps and tables contained in the [first report](#). Comments are due April 13, 2020; replies are due May 13, 2020.

- The USDA [announced](#) on February 24, 2020, it has invested \$3.3 million in a high-speed broadband infrastructure project in Montana. The USDA said Southern Montana Telephone will use the funding to construct a FTTH network. The funding is through the [USDA's ReConnect Program](#).
- The USDA [announced](#) on February 25, 2020, it has invested \$9.1 million in high-speed broadband infrastructure in South Carolina. The USDA said TruVista Communications will use the funding to deploy 257 miles of fiber-optic cable in unserved areas. The USDA also [announced](#) it invested \$2.3 million in a high-speed broadband project in Nevada, and said Beehive Telephone will use the funding to construct a fixed wireless system and three FTTP systems. The funding is through the [USDA's ReConnect Program](#).
- The USDA [announced](#) on February 28, 2020, it has invested \$19 million in three high-speed broadband infrastructure projects in Texas. The USDA said Border to Border Communications, Mid-South Synergy, and Peoples Telephone Cooperative will use the funding to deploy FTTP networks. The funding is through the [USDA's ReConnect Program](#).
- The USDA [announced](#) on February 28, 2020, it has invested \$28 million in high-speed broadband infrastructure in Virginia. The USDA said Central Virginia Electric Cooperative will use the funding to construct a FTTP network encompassing 704 square miles. The funding is through the [USDA's ReConnect Program](#).
- Sens. Ron Wyden (D Ore.), John Barrasso (R Wyo.), et al. sent a [letter](#) to Sonny Perdue, Secretary of Agriculture, USDA, on February 26, 2020, to urge him to allow rural communities that lack high-speed broadband - but have received FCC funding for satellite service - to remain eligible for funding from the USDA. They said USDA's current policies deny funding to service providers that wish to serve geographic areas that have previously received FCC funding for satellite service, even though USDA does not consider satellite service to be sufficient. They urged the USDA to act to allow service providers to submit applications for ReConnect funds if the area has only received FCC auction funding for satellite service, but would otherwise be eligible. They also asked that the USDA extend the application deadline to allow affected applicants to submit applications or amend their application. [press release](#)
- The FCC issued a [public notice](#) on February 25, 2020, announcing the next meeting of the Technological Advisory Council will be held on March 24, 2020. At this meeting, the TAC will hear presentations from its four working groups: 5G/IOT/V-RAN, Future of Unlicensed Operations, Artificial Intelligence, and 5G Radio Access Network Technology.
- Commissioner Starks [announced](#) on February 27, 2020, he and Federal Trade Commissioner Rebecca Kelly Slaughter will jointly host a field hearing in Detroit, Michigan on March 16, 2020, on promoting equity for 5G technology and big data. The hearing will feature Rep. Brenda Lawrence (D Mich.) and will include community leaders based in Detroit, renowned scholars, and policy advocates from across the United States.
- Sens. John Thune (R S.D.), Jon Tester (D Mont.), Jerry Moran (R Kan.), Gary Peters (D Mich.), and Roger Wicker (R Miss.) [introduced](#) the "[Telecommunications Skilled Workforce Act](#)" on February 27, 2020, to address the shortage of trained workers that are necessary to fill next-generation jobs in the telecommunications industry in communities throughout the country, particularly rural America. The bill would establish a Department of Labor-led interagency working group that, in consultation with the FCC and other stakeholders, would be tasked with developing recommendations to address the workforce needs of the telecommunications industry, among other things. Commissioner Carr issued a [statement](#).
- Replies were filed on February 24, 2020, on [INCOMPAS's](#) petition for reconsideration of the [report and order](#) establishing the Digital Opportunity Data Collection. [NTCA](#) agreed with INCOMPAS that only broadband providers using their own last-mile facilities to provide broadband service should be required to file polygons of their service areas. NTCA said grant of the INCOMPAS petition is necessary to ensure that the DODC draws the proper distinction between broadband deployment versus subscription. [INCOMPAS](#) responded to USTelecom's [opposition](#) and said the Commission

should be focused on obtaining information from facilities-based providers and not requiring providers who are purchasing wholesale access via BDS/UNEs on incumbent networks to file polygons that disclose their customer locations. [public notice](#), [FR](#)

- The California Public Utilities Commission met with advisors to [Chairman Pai](#) and Commissioners [Rosenworcel](#) and [Starks](#), and Wireline Competition Bureau, Office Economics and Analytics, and Wireless Telecommunications Bureau [staff](#) on February 13, 2020, to discuss CPUC's experience with broadband availability and adoption data collection, data validation, and GIS-based mapping in the context of the DODC proceeding. The CPUC made several recommendations for how FCC could proceed with the DODC initiative, particularly working with states that manage ongoing broadband data and mapping operations.
- The Satellite Industry Association filed a [letter](#) on February 25, 2020, on broadband data collection. SIA asserted data about satellite broadband providers' beam locations or capacity would not provide additional more granular information about the reach of networks or where satellite broadband providers make service available. SIA said data about where customers have chosen to subscribe to satellite broadband service (and where they have not) similarly does not answer the question of where satellite broadband service is available. SIA asserted it would not be feasible or useful to attempt to collect data about customers that cannot receive satellite broadband service as a result of terrain or foliage.
- Voices for Innovation sent a [letter](#) to Chairman Pai and the FCC Commissioners on February 21, 2020, to urge the FCC to advance broadband availability by launching a FNPRM to make critically needed improvements to white space device rules and to improve the accuracy of the broadband mapping data. It asserted the exact scope of the broadband problem remains uncertain due to inaccuracies in the data that informs the national broadband maps, and asked the Commission to add the improved instructions from its new data collection methodology to the existing Form 477 instructions.
- Crown Castle [met with](#) Wireline Competition Bureau staff on February 20, 2020, to ask the FCC to clarify section 224 to promote the deployment of next-generation infrastructure on existing utility poles. Crown Castle asked the FCC to halt blanket prohibitions by pole owners that prevent attachment of certain equipment or attachment to certain sectors of the pole, claiming pole owners often impose these ad hoc bans without clear safety or engineering rationale. Crown Castle also asked the FCC to restrict utilities from requiring pole attachment agreement terms that conflict with the Commission's rules.
- CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, Florida Power & Light, Gulf Power, and Southern Indiana Gas and Electric [met with](#) Wireline Competition Bureau and the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau staff, [General Counsel](#) staff, and advisors to Commissioners [Carr](#), [Starks](#), [Rosenworcel](#), and [O'Rielly](#) on February 20 and 21, 2020, to urge the Commission to deny CTIA's [petition for declaratory ruling](#) on pole attachments. They said if the Commission is not inclined to do so, then at a minimum, the Commission must commence a formal rulemaking, and develop a complete record on the important issues that the petition presents.
- No replies were filed on the Department of Hawaiian Homelands [petition](#) for waiver to file as an eligible entity in the 2.5 GHz rural tribal priority window. [public notice](#)

Robocalls

- The Wireline Competition Bureau and Consumer and Government Affairs Bureau issued a [public notice](#) on February 26, 2020, seeking comment on recommendations [approved](#) by the North American Numbering Council on funding of the creation costs and on the fee structure for the reassigned numbers database. The FCC said the database will enable a caller to determine whether a telephone number has been reassigned and thus avoid calling consumers with reassigned numbers who may not wish to receive their call. Comments are due March 11, 2020.

- Comments were filed on February 24, 2020, on the [NPRM](#) on establishing a registration process for the registration of a single consortium that conducts private-led efforts to trace back the origin of suspected unlawful robocalls. [USTelecom](#) expressed support for Commission action to establish proposed rules for the registration process. USTelecom said it is essential that the consortium selected have experience in the traceback process, is a neutral third-party, is competent in managing tracebacks, and has set of robust written best practices governing its activities. [INCOMPAS](#) urged the Commission to seek additional information about the level of involvement of all voice service providers in the decision-making of the consortium and the extent to which service providers have a role in the development of the consortium's best practices. [NCTA](#) proposed the Commission require the following showings as part of the neutrality component of the registration process: the traceback administration entity should be required to establish and maintain an executive committee or comparable forum and provide transparency around its budgeting process; and the FCC should consider whether neutrality requires the traceback group to operate as a self-managing entity. Replies are due March 2, 2020. [all comments available](#)
- USTelecom, CenturyLink, Frontier and Verizon [met with](#) Wireline Competition Bureau staff on February 20, 2020, to discuss implementation of the TRACED Act. They provided input on what steps a voice service provider must take in order to be considered as having implemented STIR/SHAKEN per the requirements of the TRACED Act and proposed a framework whereby all voice service providers would be required to implement a robust robocall mitigation program.
- Comments were filed on February 24, 2020, on the technical requirements for the reassigned numbers database, which was established in the 2018 robocall [order](#). [Telnix](#) recommended the Commission impose identical obligations on service providers, service provider agents and resellers with respect to toll-free numbers as are proposed with respect to non-toll-free numbers, either instead of, or in addition to, the obligation on the Toll Free Number Administrator to report disconnections. The [American Bankers Association](#) expressed support for establishment of a single, comprehensive reassigned numbers database and asked the Commission to ensure the database can process a high volume of queries submitted by callers and provide a response within a short time frame. Replies are due March 9, 2020. [public notice](#)
- Reply comments were filed on February 28, 2020, on the Commission's first staff report on call blocking. The [American Financial Services Association](#) urged the FCC to require voice service providers to provide notice to callers when the provider has placed a flag or blocked an business's outbound calling number. It also suggested the FCC require voice service providers make available a robust challenge mechanism that permits legitimate businesses to have blocks repealed quickly and permanently. [Noble Systems](#) said the final rules should define the contents of the intercept announcement and the session initiation protocol error code value indicating a call was blocked. The [Credit Union National Association](#) said efforts must be undertaken to ensure that legitimate calls can be completed and that robust mechanisms exist to correct erroneous call blocking or mislabeling. [Cloud Communications Alliance](#) and [SiriusXM Radio](#). [FR public notice](#)
- [Frontier](#), [T-Mobile](#), and [TDS](#) filed letters on February 28, 2020, to respond to the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, which sought information on what steps providers were taking to combat robocalls. Frontier said it has deployed STIR/SHAKEN on its IP network and discussed several call blocking tools it offers. T-Mobile said it is now delivering STIR/SHAKEN number-verification across networks with Sprint and plans to announce implementation with others soon. TDS said it has completed an evaluation process for the selection of a vendor to integrate call analytics to better identify and enable blocking in both the TDM and IP aspects of its network. [Vonage](#) and [Comcast](#) also filed responses to the Bureau.
- CTIA, NCTA and USTelecom [met separately with](#) advisors to Chairman Pai and Commissioners O'Rielly, Carr, Rosenworcel and Starks and Wireline Competition Bureau staff on February 19, and 20, 2020, to discuss the need for a broad safe harbor that promotes voice service providers' good-faith efforts to combat abusive robocalls. They asserted a broad safe harbor based on reasonable analytics will give voice service providers the clarity and certainty needed to meaningfully advance the Commission's goal of protecting consumers from illegal and unwanted robocalls while protecting legitimate calls.

[Back to Highlights](#)

Call Completion

- [Inteliquent](#) and [T-Mobile](#) filed replies on February 24, 2020, in support of [their motions](#) that sought dismissal of plaintiffs' [complaint](#) alleging T-Mobile's provision of false ring tones resulted in lost opportunities to seek intercarrier compensation. Intelliquent also filed a [reply](#) in support of its [motion](#) for primary jurisdiction referral.

Universal Service

- Reply comments were filed on February 24, 2020, on the [FNPRM](#) on adding a goal of broadband adoption to the Lifeline program, making additional program integrity improvements to the program, and establishing privacy training requirements for entities accessing Lifeline subscribers' personal information. [Sprint](#) said the Commission should decline to adopt proposals that would ban in-person distribution of free Lifeline handsets, require Lifeline subscribers to periodically check in with USAC to confirm their active status, and require ETCs to perform background checks and certify to unspecified privacy training. [NTTA](#) said the Commission should stop adding layers of regulation to the Lifeline program, especially for tribally-owned and other small carriers serving Tribal areas. [Smith Bagley](#) asserted the Commission has already adopted sufficient program safeguards in the form of the national verifier and other recently implemented reforms, and it should give these reforms a chance to work and evaluate their effectiveness before imposing further requirements. [New America's Open Technology Institute](#) asserted the Commission should reject proposals to prohibit ETCs from offering free handsets and to monitor Lifeline subscribers' data usage [FR, all replies available](#)
- Oppositions are due March 2, 2020, to petitions for reconsideration of the November 2019 Lifeline [order](#) filed by [WTA](#), [TruConnect](#) and [Sprint](#). Replies to oppositions are due March 12, 2020. [public notice](#)
- An FCC [notice](#) was published in the Federal Register on February 25, 2020, correcting the [notice](#) that announced the dates for filing oppositions and replies on petitions for reconsideration of the November 2019 Lifeline [order](#) filed by [WTA](#), [TruConnect](#), and [Sprint](#). Oppositions are due March 2, 2020; replies are due March 12, 2020.
- WTA [met with](#) Wireline Competition Bureau staff on February 19, 2020, to discuss its [petition for reconsideration](#) of the November 2019 Lifeline [order](#), which asked the Commission to reconsider placing the same registration requirements for the Lifeline Representative Accountability Database on representatives directly employed by facilities-based ETCs as the sales agents and enrollment representatives employed by wireless resellers with Lifeline-only ETC designations.
- TruConnect and Sage Telecom [spoke with](#) Wireline Competition Bureau staff on February 19, 2020, to discuss their [petition for reconsideration](#) of the decision to adopt new section 54.406(b), which prohibits ETCs from paying commissions to Lifeline enrollment representatives. They urged the Commission to rescind the new rule or if it does not act on the petition, reconsider and extend the effective date of this rule.
- Alaska Communications [met separately with](#) legal advisors to Commissioners Rosenworcel and Starks and Wireline Competition Bureau staff on February 19, 2020, to discuss [its](#) and other [petitions](#) for reconsideration of the [order](#) on rural health care reforms. It urged the Commission to act quickly on the [petitions for reconsideration](#) and said they raise questions about USAC's authority to create the rate database used to establish the median rural rate governing Telecommunications Program support.
- The Wireline Competition Bureau released a [public notice](#) on February 28, 2020, granting, denying and dismissing various petitions related to actions taken by USAC on E-Rate and rural health care. Petitions for reconsideration or applications for review of these decisions must be filed within 30 days of the public notice.

- The FCC released a [public notice](#) on February 28, 2020, announcing [SECA](#) and [Infinity Communications and Consulting](#) filed petitions for reconsideration of the E-Rate Category 2 report and order. Oppositions are due 15 days after publication in the Federal Register; replies are due 10 days after the time for filing oppositions has expired.
- The Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband Coalition sent a [letter](#) to Kris Monteith, Chief of the Wireline Competition Bureau, on February 27, 2020, asking for an extension of the filing window for FY 2020 rural health care applications, until June 30, 2020. SHLB cited issues with delays in notification of FY 2019 applications and difficulty in changes to the program rules as reasons for the request.
- Commissioner Starks [spoke](#) at a field hearing on resilient communications networks in San Juan, Puerto Rico on February 21, 2020. He said the FCC and federal government responded too slowly in the aftermath Hurricanes Irma and Maria, and said the Commission must make Puerto Rico's communications networks more resilient. He said the Commission has initiatives in progress, and noted the recent FCC announcement of procedures for the distribution of \$691 million for fixed broadband networks in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- Puerto Rico Telephone Company [spoke with](#) Commissioner Starks on February 21, 2020, to discuss the Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund. PRTC asserted the FCC has adopted inconsistent frameworks for determining location adjustments in the Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund and the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund proceedings. It also expressed concern with the Wireline Bureau's use of 2017 estimated housing unit data in establishing the number of locations in Puerto Rico. PRTC asserted the Bureau should use the 2018 housing data instead.
- Critical Hub Networks [spoke with](#) Commissioner Starks and his legal advisor on February 21, 2020, to discuss the letter of credit requirement for the Uniendo a Puerto Rico and Connect USVI Fund. It claimed the requirement for support recipients constitutes a barrier to small entities' abilities to compete for funds and suggested several alternatives for the Commission to consider.
- Viya [met with](#) Wireline Competition Bureau staff on February 20, 2020, to ask that the FCC grant its [petition](#) for clarification or reconsideration of the Uniendo a Puerto Rico and Connect USVI Fund [report and order](#).
- Cross Telephone filed a [letter](#) on February 24, 2020, to respond to Commission questions on its [request for review](#) of a USAC audit appeal decision that concluded that certain expenses should have been excluded from the Cross high cost program reports. Cross asserted USAC's decision was incorrect and said if the Commission upholds USAC's interpretation, it should apply the rule only on a prospective basis.
- Telegation filed a [petition](#) on February 28, 2020, seeking reconsideration and a waiver of the streamlined denial of its request for review and waiver of the deadline for filings revisions to FCC Form 499-A. Telegation said an inadvertent typo on its 2006 FCC Form 499-A caused it to overstate its assessable revenues by approximately \$1.5 million and confusion over Telegation's attempt to fix the error with both USAC and the FCC simultaneously has left the matter unresolved.

[Back to Highlights](#)

Misc.

- The FCC adopted at its February 28, 2020 [Open Meeting](#) a [public notice](#) (statements by Chairman [Pai](#), and Commissioners [Starks](#) and [O'Rielly](#), and [Rosenworcel](#)) that launches the process of establishing pre-and post-auction application procedures and competitive bidding procedures for Phase I of the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund. The FCC also adopted: a [NPRM](#) (statements by [Pai](#), [Rosenworcel](#), [Carr](#), [Starks](#) and [O'Rielly](#)) proposing targeted changes to the white space device rules in the TV bands to provide improved broadband coverage in rural and underserved areas; a [report and order and proposed order of modification](#) reforming the use of the 3.7-4.2 GHz band, to promote U.S. leadership in the next generation of wireless services; a [public notice](#) on procedures for the auction of new flexible-use overlay licenses in the 3.7–3.98 GHz band (Auction 107) for next generation wireless

services; a [public notice](#) establishing application and bidding procedures for Auction 105, the auction of Priority Access Licenses in the Citizens Broadband Radio Service in the 3550-3650 MHz band; a [NPRM](#) on whether to eliminate or modify the requirement that cable operators maintain records in their online public inspection files regarding the nature and extent of their attributable interests in video programming services; and a [second FNPRM](#) providing state and federal agencies with read-only access to communications outage data for public safety purposes while preserving the confidentiality of that data. The items are not yet released.

- The FCC [deleted](#) from the February 28, 2020 Open Meeting [agenda](#) the [report and order](#) that would modernize the carriage election notice provisions in the FCC's rules for low-power TV and noncommercial educational translator stations, which are not required to maintain online public inspection files. The FCC said the item has already been adopted.
- The Wireline Competition Bureau and Office of Economics and Analytics issued a [public notice](#) on February 26, 2020, to [announce](#) the opening of a [reporting portal](#) for supply chain information, as required by the 2019 [order](#). The FCC said reporting is mandatory for all ETCs and they must report the extent to which their networks contain or use potentially prohibited equipment or services provided by Huawei or ZTE or their subsidiaries, parents, or affiliates, and the costs associated with removing such equipment and replacing it with equivalent equipment. ETCs that do not use Huawei or ZTE equipment must report they do not use such services or equipment. The deadline for reporting is April 22, 2020.
- The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation will hold a [hearing](#) entitled "5G Supply Chain Security: Threats and Solutions," on March 4, 2020. The hearing will examine the security and integrity of the telecommunications supply chain and efforts to secure networks from exploitation in the transition to 5G. The hearing will also examine the federal government's role in mitigating risks to telecommunications equipment and services in the U.S. and abroad. Witnesses: Steven Berry, Competitive Carriers Association; Rick Corker, Nokia; Jason Boswell, Ericsson; and Dr. James Lewis, Center for Strategic and International Studies.
- The Senate [unanimously passed the "Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act of 2019"](#) on February 27, 2020, which prohibits the use of federal funds administered by the FCC to purchase communications equipment or services from any company that poses a national security risk to American communications networks. The bill also requires the FCC to establish the Secure and Trusted Communications Reimbursement Program to assist small communications providers with the costs of removing prohibited equipment or services from their networks and replacing the prohibited equipment with more secure communications equipment or services. The House [passed](#) the bill in December 2019 and now awaits approval by President Trump.
- The FCC [announced](#) on February 28, 2020, it proposed fines against AT&T, Verizon, T-Mobile and Sprint, for apparently selling access to their customers' location information without taking reasonable measures to protect against unauthorized access to that information. The FCC proposed fines of over \$91 million for [T-Mobile](#), \$57 million for [AT&T](#), \$48 million for [Verizon](#), and \$12 million for [Sprint](#). The FCC also admonished these carriers for apparently disclosing their customers' location information, without their authorization, to a third party.
- No replies were filed on a 214 application requesting consent to transfer control of Illinois Network Alliance to Missouri Network Alliance. [public notice](#)
- No replies were filed on a 214 application requesting Buggs Island Cooperative transfer assets to EMPOWER. [public notice](#)
- The Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau issued two orders on February 27, 2020, addressing slamming complaints against [Telplex Communications d/b/a/ RingPlanet](#) and [Telplex Communications](#). The Bureau found actions by RingPlanet and Telplex did not result in unauthorized changes in complainant's telecommunications service provider and denied both complaints.

[Back to Highlights](#)

Upcoming Filing Dates

- Mar. 3 - Replies due on the supply chain [FNPRM](#).
- Mar. 4 - Comments due on NECA's December 2019 [proposed average schedule formulas](#). Replies are due March 19, 2020. [public notice](#)
- Mar. 4 - Oppositions due to Viya's [petition for reconsideration](#) of the [public notice](#) announcing location counts and reserve prices for the Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund and Connect USVI Fund Stage 2 fixed support competitive proposal process. Replies due March 16, 2020. [public notice](#), [FR](#)
- Mar. 5 - PRA comments due on a revision of a currently approved information collection associated with Part 61 tariffing. The revisions are necessitated by the access arbitrage [order](#). [FR](#)
- Mar. 9 - Replies due on the technical requirements for the reassigned numbers database, which was established in the 2018 robocall [order](#). [public notice](#)
- Mar. 11 - Comments due on recommendations [approved](#) by the NANC on funding of the creation costs and on the fee structure for the reassigned numbers database. [public notice](#)
- Mar. 12 - Replies to oppositions due on petitions for reconsideration of the November 2019 Lifeline [order](#) filed by [WTA](#), [TruConnect](#) and [Sprint](#). [public notice](#)
- Mar. 13 - Replies due on seeking to refresh the record on ways to modernize and strengthen the truth-in-billing rules. [public notice](#), [Federal Register](#)
- Mar 16 - Replies due on the [NPRM](#) on updating the Commission's suspension and debarment rules to make them consistent with OMB guidelines to better prevent bad actors from participating in USF programs, TRS programs and the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program. [FR](#).
- Mar. 16 - Comments due on the re-establishment of a computer matching program the FCC and USAC will conduct with the Department of Housing and Urban Development to verify the eligibility of applicants to and subscribers of the Lifeline program. [notice](#)
- Mar. 16 - Replies due to oppositions to Viya's [petition for reconsideration](#) of the [public notice](#) announcing location counts and reserve prices for the Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund and Connect USVI Fund Stage 2 fixed support competitive proposal process. [public notice](#), [FR](#)
- Mar. 19 - Replies due on NECA's December 2019 [proposed average schedule formulas](#). [public notice](#)
- Mar. 20 - Replies due on the [NPRM](#) on updating its unbundling and resale rules to reflect the marketplace realities of intermodal voice and broadband competition. [order](#), [FR](#)
- Mar. 23 - PRA comments are due on an extension of a currently approved information collection regarding access to numbering resource application information. [FCC notice](#)
- Mar. 23 - PRA comments are due on an extension of a currently approved information collection associated with Parts 54 and 69 filing requirements for regulation of interstate services of non-price cap ILECs and IXCs. [notice](#)
- Mar. 24 - PRA comments due on an extension of a currently approved information collection associated with payphone compensation. [FCC notice](#)
- Mar. 26 - Comments due on a population distribution methodology for estimating the number of Alaskans who receive mobile service within census blocks in remote areas. The WTB proposes to use this methodology to determine whether mobile service providers participating in the Alaska Plan have

met their performance commitments through deployment in eligible census blocks. Reply comments are due April 10, 2020. [public notice](#)

- Mar. 30 - PRA comments due on a revision of a currently approved information collection associated with changes in reporting and recording keeping requirements for FCC forms 460, 461, 462, 463, 465, 3466 and 467 (rural health care.) [FR](#)
- Mar. 30 - Comments due on refreshing the record in the Restoring Internet Freedom and Lifeline proceedings. The Bureau seeks comment on how changes adopted in the RIF [order](#) might affect: public safety; the regulation of pole attachments in states subject to federal regulation; and the Lifeline program. Replies are due April 29, 2020. [public notice](#)
- Apr. 6 - PRA comments due on a revision of a currently approved information collection on FCC Form 183, the application to participate in the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund auction. [notice](#)
- Apr. 10 - Replies due on a population distribution methodology for estimating the number of Alaskans who receive mobile service within census blocks in remote areas. The WTB proposes to use this methodology to determine whether mobile service providers participating in the Alaska Plan have met their performance commitments through deployment in eligible census blocks. [public notice](#)
- Apr. 3 - Comments due on the state of competition in the communications marketplace for its second communications marketplace report. Replies are due May 13, 2020. [public notice](#)
- Apr. 14 - PRA comments due on an extension of a currently approved information collection relating to the monitoring of USF support mechanisms. PRA comments are due April 14, 2020. [FCC notice](#)
- Apr. 20 - PRA comments due on a new information collection as a result of the December 12, 2018 [order](#) on robocalls, which established a database to enable callers to verify whether a telephone number has been disconnected before calling that number. [notice](#)
- Apr. 20 - PRA comments due on a revision to a currently approved information collection associated with FCC Forms 481, 497, 555, 5629, 5630 and 5631, as a result of the November 2019 Lifeline [order](#). [FR](#)
- Apr. 22 - Deadline for ETCs to report on the extent to which their networks contain or use potentially prohibited equipment or services provided by Huawei or ZTE and the costs associated with removing such equipment and replacing it with equivalent equipment. [public notice](#)
- Apr. 29 - Replies due on refreshing the record in the Restoring Internet Freedom and Lifeline proceedings. The Bureau seeks comment on how changes adopted in the RIF [order](#) might affect: public safety; the regulation of pole attachments in states subject to federal regulation; and the Lifeline program. [public notice](#)
- May 13 - Replies due on the state of competition in the communications marketplace for its second communications marketplace report. [public notice](#)

[Back to Highlights](#)

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