



Don J. Cameron  
Board President  
General Manager,  
Terranova Ranch, Inc.

August 23, 2018

Joshua Eddy  
Executive Director

Rachelle Pastor Arizmendi  
VP & Chief Operating  
Officer for Pacific Asian  
Consortium in  
Employment

Ashley Boren  
Executive Director,  
Sustainable Conservation

Donald Bransford, Owner,  
Bransford Farms

Nancy Casady  
General Manager  
Ocean Beach People's  
Organic Food Co-Op

Helene Dillard, Dean  
College of Agricultural and  
Environmental Sciences  
at the University of  
California, Davis

Michael Gallo, Co-owner  
Joseph Gallo Farms

Crystal Hayling, Executive  
Director,  
The Libra Foundation

Eric Holst,  
Senior Director,  
Environmental Defense  
Fund

Jeff Huckaby, President  
Grimmway Farms

Bryce Lundberg,  
Vice President,  
Lundberg Family Farms

Martha Montoya,  
President,  
Los Kitos Produce

Frank Muller, Co-Owner  
Muller Ranch, LLC

Joy Sterling, CEO  
Iron Horse Vineyards

Andrew J. Thulin, Dean  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environmental  
Sciences, California  
Polytechnic State  
University

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai and Commissioners:

The California State Board of Food and Agriculture is an advisory body to the governor and secretary of agriculture on issues impacting farmers and ranchers of the state. As the largest agricultural producer and exporter in the nation a variety of issues impact the economic viability of California's agricultural sector and the communities connected to it. However, no issue is more strongly linked to the economic development, health and safety of these communities than broadband connectivity.

One of the initiatives of the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) is 'Bridging the Digital Divide for All Americans' – this effort aims to connect the 30 million Americans who do not have broadband connectivity. In California, it is estimated that 3.8 million households lack meaningful internet access – approximately 16 percent are households located in rural areas. Since many California communities are 'rural in character' and do not meet the federal definition of rural, it is estimated that many more rural households are impacted.

As the FCC moves forward with programs to address the digital divide in rural areas of the nation, Connect America Fund Phase II (CAF-II) and others, this Board is encouraged that allocated funding through auctions will be proportional to the needs of unserved and underserved broadband populations nationally.

The Board appreciates your continued actions to address the digital divide within nation as well as a focus on assisting rural communities and communities that are 'rural in character.' Agriculture is a key industry for our nation and deploying broadband access to the nation's farmers and ranchers is vital to maintaining the farm economy and the communities in which they are based.

Sincerely,

  
Don J. Cameron

cc: The Honorable Jerry Brown, Governor  
Michael Picker, California Public Utilities Commission  
Karen Ross, California Department of Food and Agriculture  
Amy Tong, California Broadband Council

