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STATE OF TEXAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ERNEST BAILES

District 18



July 21, 2020

Commissioners
Public Utility Commission of Texas
1701 N. Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Chairman Walker, Commissioner D'Andrea, and Commissioner Botkin,

Thank you for your continued leadership during this unprecedented time.

I'm writing to offer my support for the Texas Universal Service Fund (TUSF), as it is an imperative component in sustaining and growing connectivity for rural Texans. During this ongoing health and economic downturn, there is a great need in my district for reliable, affordable access to telemedicine, remote work, distance learning, e-commerce, and connecting with friends and family.

I realize the Public Utility Commission recently had the opportunity to keep the TUSF solvent, but chose not to do so. I also understand there are several options available to keep the fund viable by rule and would not require legislative action.

The Commission's responsibility to keep the fund solvent is absolutely critical and is required by law. This decision could impact telephone service to citizens across 55% of the state, especially in rural areas such as my district where the digital divide will disproportionately affect rural Texans.

Your time and efforts are greatly appreciated on this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

Ernest Bailes

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