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TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



J.D. Sheffield, D.O.
District 59



Public Utility Commission of Texas
1701 N. Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78711
July 24, 2020

RE: Project No. 50796, Review of the TUSF rate

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

It has come to my attention that the Texas Universal Service Fund is facing a crisis. The USF has done an admirable job of providing telephone and Internet services to our rural, underserved constituents. District 59 is a good example of rural Texas that is served by companies that depend on funding from the USF to provide these telecommunications services. If the fund is depleted and no provisions are made for funding restoration, much of rural Texas and other underserved areas will suffer. The current COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the need for such services. Schools now depend on the Internet to offer instruction. Work from home has become an ever-increasing option for thousands of employees. I have been able to restructure some of the patient load in our clinic by relying on telemedicine services.

As I understand it the PUC has funding options available without having to rely on the next legislative session. Waiting for legislative action will be too late and our constituents will suffer. Going ahead and funding the USF will ensure that rural and underserved areas can continue to get the services needed in our ever-changing world.

I ask you to please select a funding mechanism that will enable the USF to remain solvent without having to depend on future legislative action.

Sincerely,


J.D. Sheffield, D-59

