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TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
DAN HUBERTY

Public Utility Commission of Texas
1701 N. Congress Avenue
Austin, TX 78711
August 6, 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 (USF) is facing a crisis. The USF has allowed rural and underserved constituents to be provided with telephone and internet services. Many rural areas, communities and school districts rely on the companies that depend on the 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 virtual learning services to offer instruction. In my position as Chairman of the House Public Education Committee, it is apparent how drastic the learning achievement gap will be for those students and districts that are not able to fully utilize telecommunications services. The USF is a critical piece of our service network and must be upheld through the uncertain times we are facing.

As I understand the situation, the Commission has existing funding options available for use without legislative approval or need to wait until the next legislative session. Waiting for legislative action will only serve to further inhibit the continued education and productivity of our rural constituents. Utilizing currently available options to further fund the USF will ensure rural areas may continue to get the services needed in our ever changing world.

I ask you to expeditiously act to secure a funding mechanism that will enable the USF to remain solvent now, so as not to be delayed until legislative action can be taken to more permanently solve this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Huberty".

Dan Huberty

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