



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chair
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

February 12, 2024

Dear Madame Chair:

The National Wireless Independent Dealers Association (NWIDA) is the only trade and advocacy association that serves the 40,000+ independent wireless shops across the country.

Many of these dealers serve their rural or urban communities where their fellow citizens rely on the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) to “stay connected.” They rely on these services for school, work, healthcare and more.

As you know, the remaining funding the government has for the ACP will run out in or near April 2024. In fact, **this past week the program stopped accepting** new applications due to the lack of funding.

We are aware of bi-partisan support for additional funding for the ACP. On January 10, 2024, the bipartisan Affordable Connectivity Program Extension Act was introduced in the House and Senate. This would provide \$7 billion in additional funding for the ACP. In addition, numerous state and local governments have expressed support for the ACP to continue.

On January 11, 2024, the Commission issued guidance to ACP providers and other stakeholders to start the orderly procedures to wind-down the ACP. ACP customers have begun to be notified of the end of the program.

I would like to stress that ending this program and then re-starting it is not a fair option. It would put undue pressure and cost millions of dollars – from the carrier to the dealers – to “restart” this program from a full stop. The ACP program **must continue without interruption**.

Nearly 23 million households nationwide are enrolled in and benefitting from the ACP.

Without additional funding for the ACP, these households will lose the wireless telecommunication and internet service they rely on. A recent FCC survey showed that:

- Nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of households use their ACP-funded internet for health care,
- Approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ use it for employment, and
- Approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of ACP subscribers between 18 and 24 years of age use it for school.

Please note that NWIDA is ready to assist with any efforts to fully fund the ACP into the future

- Adam Wolf
President

659 Eagle Rock Ave – Ste 23 | West Orange, NJ 07052

(919) 694-3298 | awolf@nwida.org
Direct Line: 973-709-8600