Telecom Alert: NTIA Broadband Funding; Receiver Performance NOI Pleading Cycle; E-Rate School Bus Proposal; ACP Commitments [Vol. XIX Issue 20]

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Internet for All Funding Opportunities
Last week, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (“NTIA”) announced the launch of the Internet for All Initiative, which includes three programs funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The NTIA released Notices of Funding Opportunities for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program ($42.5 billion), Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program ($1 billion), and State Digital Equity Act programs ($1.5 billion), with application windows opening as early as last Friday.

Receiver Performance NOI Pleading Cycle

The FCC’s Notice of Inquiry seeking to develop an up-to-date record on the role of receivers in spectrum management was published in the Federal Register last week (Vol. XIX, Issue 14). The Commission seeks to improve receiver interference immunity performance, as it has typically relied on rules establishing transmitter requirements to promote spectrum efficiency. Comments and reply comments are due by June 27 and July 27, respectively.

E-Rate Proposal to Fund School Bus WiFi

Last week, the FCC announced that Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel circulated a Declaratory Ruling proposing to allow E-Rate funding to equip school buses with WiFi. The proposal would clarify that use of WiFi, or similar access point technologies, on school buses serves an educational purpose. Funding for WiFi is already covered under the Emergency Connectivity Fund, and the Commission has committed more than $35 million through it for the purchase of hotspots and broadband services for school buses.

White House Announces ACP Commitments

Last week, the Biden Administration announced that twenty internet service providers (“ISPs”) have committed to offer high-speed internet connections for no more than $30 a month for all eligible households under the Affordable Connectivity Program (“ACP”) (Vol. XIX, Issue 4). The ACP provides eligible households with discounts of up to $30 a month for broadband service, so the committed ISPs will be able to offer service to such households at no cost the customer. These companies offer high-speed internet services in areas in which over 80% of the U.S. population lives.

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