



MAYOR REX RICHARDSON

August 2, 2024

The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel
Chair, Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street, Northeast
Washington, DC 20554

RE: Protecting Bulk Billing Arrangements

Dear Chairwoman Rosenworcel and Commissioners,

On behalf of the City of Long Beach (City), I write to respectfully request the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to stop considering any bans or regulations on bulk billing arrangements for broadband and cable services. The City is committed to bridging the digital divide by connecting residents to vital resources and programs. To ensure continued connectivity for our residents, we must have various options available and employ diverse strategies to address the multifaceted challenges of bridging the digital divide. Bulk billing is one such tool that is helpful to consumers, particularly those facing affordability challenges in multi-dwelling environments.

Bulk billing arrangements can secure numerous benefits for consumers, most notably significantly lower broadband prices. In Long Beach, retail broadband services for individual homeowners typically cost \$60-\$80 per month, while bulk billing arrangements often secure prices 50 percent less—resulting in savings comparable to the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) discount. Bulk billing also incentivizes providers to deploy fiber facilities and, in apartments and condos, managed Wi-Fi, ensuring reliable broadband and voice connectivity throughout the building. Consumers receiving services through bulk billing also benefit from the elimination of extra fees like installation and late fees, and they avoid enrollment requirements, such as credit checks. Fifteen years ago, the FCC recognized the pro-consumer benefits of bulk billing and declined to regulate them, a decision that remains unchanged and highlights the FCC's longstanding understanding of the value these arrangements bring to consumers.

These benefits help all consumers, but they are particularly impactful for low-income and other vulnerable communities, as they lower or eliminate adoption barriers that prevent these groups from digitally connecting with their families, neighbors, and vital service providers. Moreover, bulk billing arrangements are a tool that governments and public housing authorities can utilize to bring free internet services to residents in affordable housing.

The City cannot afford to undercut market-based solutions that provide significant benefits to consumers or remove options that can be used to help close the digital divide in Long Beach and across the nation. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the FCC to protect bulk billing arrangements.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rex Richardson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mayor Rex Richardson
City of Long Beach

cc: The Honorable Senator Alex Padilla
The Honorable Senator Laphonza Butler
The Honorable Congressman Robert Garcia, 42nd District
The Honorable Congressman Nanette Barragan, 44th District

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