May 20, 2020

The Honorable Ajit Pai  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
455 12th St. SW  
Washington, DC 20554

RE: In Support of COVID-19 Adjustment to FCC Timelines Governing Tribal Priority Filing Windows

Dear Chairman Pai,

The Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes, an organization comprised of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations representing 790,000 tribal citizens throughout the United States, respectfully request the tribal priority window for 2.5GHz spectrum over tribal lands be extended for three months.

Our request is consistent with the request made recently by the Commission’s Native Nations Communications Task Force. We also understand that the National Congress of American Indians has submitted a similar request along with asking the Commission to delay the start of the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (Auction 904).

While tribal nations throughout the country are faced with a varying set of needs and circumstances, the one thing we have in common is that our citizens are disproportionately impacted by the health conditions that make them the most vulnerable and at a higher risks of a serious COVID-19 illness. As a result, our focus is on protecting the health and safety of our citizens and communities.

The Five Tribes have been on the front lines of COVID-19 crisis from day one. We have continued to provide essential services to our citizens including health care, food, housing, public safety, education and other critical services. In many instances, we have even expanded these programs despite incurring a tremendous loss of revenue due to tribal business closures and a workforce teleworking or on paid-administrative leave.

Tribal nations are dedicating resources that would typically be used to focus on these opportunities to instead focus on the immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We believe extending the tribal priority window for 2.5GHz spectrum over tribal lands will better position tribes and the Commission in meeting their mutual goal of bridging the digital divide in Indian Country.
Thank you for your consideration of this request. If we can provide further information to you or your staff, please contact Kim Teehee at: kim-teehee@cherokee.org or (202) 615-9505.

Sincerely,

Bill Anoatubby
Governor
The Chickasaw Nation

Gary Batton, Chief
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Chuck Hoskin Jr., Principal Chief
Cherokee Nation

David W. Hill
Principal Chief
Muscogee (Creek) Nation

Greg P. Chilcoat, Chief
Seminole Nation of Oklahoma

CC:
Mr. Donald Stockdale, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Chief, FCC;
Mr. Matthew Duchesne, Office of Native Affairs and Policy, FCC