

United States Senate

November 5, 2015

The Honorable Tom Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

In light of issues raised regarding Sandwich Isles Communications (SIC), I want to make sure that the FCC closely monitors the potential impacts on SIC's customers.

In a September 2015 ruling, the Hawaii Public Utilities Commission (PUC) rejected SIC's bid for recertification as a telecommunications carrier eligible to receive federal financial support from the Universal Service Fund due to concerns that the company was not using federal funds "...for the provision, maintenance and upgrading of facilities and services for which support is intended." I understand that Hawaii's PUC ruling follows the FCC's decision to suspend federal funds while the Universal Service Administrative Company conducts an audit of the company.

I fully support the PUC's decision and the FCC's actions related to SIC. The Commission must continue efforts to combat waste, fraud and abuse of the Universal Service Fund. In fact, the FCC's recent public notice on this issue is an important reminder to companies that they have a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that public dollars are used as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Parallel to these actions however, we must also strive to ensure uninterrupted service to SIC's customers. I am writing to request that you commit to using all of the FCC's statutory and regulatory powers to protect consumers and prevent the disruption of services to SIC's customers during and beyond the audit.

I would appreciate your personal attention to this matter. Improving accountability in the industry and ensuring on-going services to all consumers is of critical importance to the FCC's universal service mission.

Respectfully,



Brian Schatz
United States Senator