



OPASTCO

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OPASTCO APPLAUDS FCC FOR ADOPTING INTERIM CAP ON USF FOR CETCs

*Cap on CETCs Important Step for Long-Term Sustainability of the USF
and Vital Telecommunications Services in High-Cost Areas*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO) today applauded the FCC for adopting its order implementing a temporary cap on universal service support for competitive eligible telecommunications carriers (CETCs). This interim cap halts the escalating growth of the fund attributed to CETCs, which are primarily wireless carriers. The order caps USF support, by state, at March 2008 support rates as a fixed pool that must be shared by all CETCs in the state.

“OPASTCO, along with our ally associations, has worked hard to ensure the long-term sustainability of the USF High-Cost program,” OPASTCO President John Rose said. “The very future of rural networks is at stake. The USF is crucial to ensuring rural America makes the transition to the IP world. We cannot allow rural communities to founder as the demand for broadband capabilities increases.

“We are pleased and wish to acknowledge the efforts of FCC Chairman Kevin Martin, and Commissioners Deborah Taylor Tate and Robert M. McDowell for recognizing the need to place an interim cap on USF for CETCs as our industry all works together to develop long-term USF reform.”

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Note to Editors: The Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO) represents nearly 600 small, independently owned, local telecommunications companies serving primarily rural areas of the United States and Canada. OPASTCO membership includes both commercial companies and cooperatives, which range in size from fewer than 100 to 100,000 access lines, and collectively serve more than 5.5 million customers. OPASTCO represents rural telecommunications interests before federal regulatory bodies and Congress, provides publications, and holds two conventions annually in January and July of each year, addressing the needs of the small telecommunications industry. The association has an affiliate 501(c)(3) nonprofit, the Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED). Visit the OPASTCO Website at www.opastco.org.