

CTIA and Verizon are voicing their support for Universal Service Fund (USF) reform after a hearing yesterday on a bill sponsored by Rep. Rick Boucher, (D-Va.), and Rep. Lee Terry, (R-Neb.)

In a statement, CTIA President and CEO Steve Largent said the association welcomes the effort by Boucher and Terry to reform the way Universal Services Funds are collected and distributed. "As this bill moves forward, we urge Congress to work toward competitively neutral reforms that target support to where it is truly needed," he said.

Verizon issued a statement saying it endorses the Boucher-Terry legislation because it embraces policies to reform and sustain the USF and directs funds to meet the "true communications needs of consumers."

Peter Davidson, Verizon senior vice president of federal government relations, said the draft Universal Service Reform Act "takes us a big step toward addressing five of the most pressing matters: An overall budget for the high-cost fund; a new contribution methodology; competitive bidding for wireless support; a date certain for related reform of intercarrier compensation; and an end to traffic pumping."

Last week, the FCC issued a public notice seeking more focused comment on universal service and intercarrier compensation policies as part of its mission to make broadband universally available to all people in the United States. The USF subsidizes programs for low-income and rural areas.



