



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Lauren Yergeau,

lyergeau@mobilebeacon.org

(401) 934-0550

NACEPF and Mobile Beacon Applaud the U.S. Department of Education for Supporting the Importance of Keeping EBS Spectrum Reserved for Educational Purposes

Johnston, RI (June 10, 2019) - The North American Catholic Educational Programming Foundation, Inc. (NACEPF) and Mobile Beacon applaud the recent [ex parte letter from the U.S. Department of Education](#), which was filed in the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)'s rulemaking docket, Transforming the 2.5 GHz Band. We agree with the Department of Education's assessment that "EBS is a valuable tool available to educational institutions to close the homework gap," and their recommendation to maintain educational eligibility to hold an EBS license, modernize the current educational requirements, rationalize existing licensed areas to county boundaries, and issue new EBS licenses using priority windows for tribes and educational entities.

"We appreciate that another federal agency has carefully reviewed both the FCC's proposals regarding EBS spectrum and the record in this docket to reach its conclusion that the FCC should preserve the educational nature of this spectrum band, but modernize the rules to promote more lifelong learning opportunities," said Katherine Messier, Executive Director, Mobile Beacon. "We agree with the U.S. Department of Education that EBS is a vital resource to provide broadband access to rural communities and tribal lands where too many Americans remain trapped in the digital divide. The FCC should not eliminate a proven tool for combating the digital divide at a time when broadband for education has never been more important."

The U.S. Department of Education's letter highlighted several examples of how EBS licensees are already actively advancing the FCC's broadband goals by providing affordable connectivity to communities in rural locations and in particular with challenging landscapes. Importantly, the Department of Education emphasized that issuing new EBS licenses and maintaining educational eligibility will not only drive long-term educational benefits but also continue to promote commercial benefits through public-private partnerships between educational entities and ISPs.

We also agree with the U.S. Department of Education that further discussion of how to modernize the educational use rules is warranted, and the FCC should request further comment and invite more participation from educational and digital inclusion groups. Lastly, we concur with the U.S. Department of Education's recommendation that if the FCC is planning to eliminate the educational nature of this band in favor of commercial auctions, the FCC should



delay its decision, allow additional time to examine the educational impact of such a decision, and seek an additional round of comment to refresh the record.

The U.S. Department of Education's filing joins the unanimous statements of support to preserve the only remaining spectrum designated for educational use from educational and public interest groups including the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN), State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA), the American Library Association (ALA), the Schools, Health and Libraries Broadband Coalition (SHLB), the National Digital Inclusion Alliance, and the National EBS Association (NEBSA). It is imperative that the FCC follows the record of ever-growing support for preserving the educational nature of EBS spectrum and acts accordingly.

###

About NACEPF: North American Catholic Educational Programming Foundation, Inc. (NACEPF) is a Rhode Island-based 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization and the second largest Educational Broadband Service (EBS) licensee in the United States. NACEPF's broadband service, religious and educational programming, and advocacy efforts support education at every level. NACEPF's worldwide philanthropic efforts focus on providing access to the resources essential to human development and well-being. This includes access to healthy food, clean water, safe housing, education, healthcare, and faith-based services. NACEPF's wholly-owned subsidiary, Mobile Beacon, provides broadband service to educational, nonprofit, and community anchor institutions throughout the United States. To learn more, visit www.nacepf.net.

About Mobile Beacon: Mobile Beacon provides high-speed, low-cost, mobile internet access to the anchors of communities: the nonprofits, schools, libraries, and healthcare organizations that provide vital services to millions of Americans every day. Through this broadband service, organizations have an essential tool to fulfill their missions and maximize their philanthropic impact, which allows organizations to access more information, reach more people, and help more in their communities. Learn more at www.mobilebeacon.org.