



July 27, 2015

VIA EMAIL

Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
National Telecommunications and Information Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce
First Responder Network Authority
Federal Railroad Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Re: Renewal and Amendment of 2009 Program Comment for Streamlining Section 106 Review for Wireless Communications Facilities Construction and Modification Subject to Review Under the FCC Nationwide Programmatic Agreement and/or the Nationwide Programmatic Agreement for the Collocation of Wireless Antennas

PCIA – The Wireless Infrastructure Association (“PCIA”) commends the efforts of the Rural Utilities Service (“RUS”), National Telecommunications and Information Administration (“NTIA”), Federal Railroad Administration (“FRA”), First Responder Network Authority (“FirstNet”), and the Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”) components (together “Reviewing Agencies”) for seeking the views of the State Historic Preservation Offices and Tribes in addition to select industry and historic preservation organizations on the proposed amendment to the *2009 Program Comment for Streamlining Section 106 Review for Wireless Communications Facilities Construction and Modification Subject to Review Under the FCC Nationwide Programmatic Agreement and/or the Nationwide Programmatic Agreement for the Collocation of Wireless Antennas* (“Program Comment”) prior to submitting a formal request to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. As the principal organization representing over 220 members that build, design, own and manage telecommunications facilities throughout the world,¹ PCIA is in an excellent position to provide comment on increasing Federal efficiency for wireless communications facilities deployment.

PCIA continuously supports efforts to improve broadband deployment, and renewing and amending the Program Comment plays an important role in expediting deployment of broadband. Therefore, PCIA offers these comments on RUS, NTIA, and FEMA’s proposed renewal and amendment of the Program Comment.

PCIA agrees that the Program Comment should be renewed. The Program Comment, expiring on September 30, 2015, relieves the RUS, NTIA, and FEMA of responsibility for conducting separate, duplicative Section 106 reviews for their funding of the construction or modification of

¹ PCIA membership includes carriers, infrastructure providers, and professional services firms.

wireless communications infrastructure that is reviewed by the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”). If the Program Comment expires, this relief will terminate along with the residual benefits of this relief, including more predictable, consistent, and expedited review procedures across agencies; improvement of communication between agencies, the FCC, and industry; and the overall increase in wireless projects.²

By renewing the Program Comment, stakeholders will continue to realize important benefits that propel broadband infrastructure deployment. Amending the Program Comment in the renewal process as RUS, NTIA, and FEMA have proposed will allow for the realization of even more efficiencies for siting wireless facilities. The proposed amendments—extending the Program Comment term, expanding the number and scope of agencies covered under the Program Comment, recognizing that the FCC’s Section 106 review may be governed by new Program Alternatives in addition to existing FCC Nationwide Programmatic Agreements, and providing a mechanism for the addition of federal agencies that have an interest in joining the Program Comment—taken together, will promote increased efficiency in wireless facilities siting.

Extension of the Program Comment term for an additional ten years will provide greater certainty to all parties involved in the Section 106 review process. The proposal to include an option for an additional five-year extension only enhances this certainty. A ten-year term, with option for renewal, will allow this streamlined review to continue into the near future without requiring additional evaluation.

Furthermore, expanding the Program Comment to cover FRA, FirstNet, and all DHS components promotes increased efficiency by extending the streamlining benefits to new stakeholders who currently have to conduct a separate, duplicative Section 106 review. Additional efficiencies can be achieved through the proposed amendment that provides a mechanism for additional agencies to join the Program Comment. This mechanism, coupled with the expressed recognition that the FCC’s Section 106 review may be governed by new program alternatives, makes the amended Program Comment more forward-looking. Under these proposed amendments, an agency would no longer need to wait for the renewal process to take advantage of the benefits of streamlining Section 106 review, and there would be better clarity as to the effect of innovative FCC broadband deployment solutions on the FCC’s Section 106 review process.

² According to RUS, since 2009, the Program Comment has relieved FEMA of conducting separate, duplicative reviews for nearly 200 projects funded through its GPD. Under its American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (“ARRA”) program, RUS funded 301 projects, of which 51 were wireless only and 33 were combined wireline/wireless. Several of the wireless projects proposed construction of more than 10 communications towers.

PCIA appreciates the opportunity to provide comments to the Reviewing Agencies, and we encourage each agency to continue to find ways to streamline the wireless infrastructure siting process to promote increased broadband deployment. We welcome future opportunities for involvement regarding the Program Comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Zac Champ". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Zac" and last name "Champ" clearly distinguishable.

D. Zachary Champ
Director of Government Affairs
PCIA – The Wireless Infrastructure Association
500 Montgomery Street, Suite 500
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 535-7407
zac.champ@pcia.com