

DOUG COLLINS  
9TH DISTRICT, GEORGIA

DISTRICT OFFICE  
210 WASHINGTON STREET NW  
SUITE 202  
GAINESVILLE, GA 30501  
(770) 297-3388

WASHINGTON OFFICE  
1504 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-9893



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-1009

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April 26, 2016

Mr. Tony Thomas  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Windstream  
4001 Rodney Parham Road  
Little Rock, AR 72212

Dear Mr. Thomas,

In a response letter you sent me in February, you mentioned several steps Windstream will take or has taken to address the persistent problems customers in Northeast Georgia have faced. As you described in your letter, a president of Georgia Operations has been appointed, and rapid response teams have been activated. However, since that time the response and service appear to be simply more of the same.

As I've said before, as a recipient of federal funding, and preferred tax status, Windstream is accountable to Congress, and it is accountable to your customers in Northeast Georgia who are paying for services they are not receiving. Customer service is not the problem – I've talked to qualified professionals who work for the company, who understand that the real problems are with woefully inadequate infrastructure. Windstream can continue to establish rapid response teams, but those teams fail to address the underlying issue of a lack of leadership and infrastructure to adequately serve the communities where your customers live.

A constituent from Hiawassee sent you a letter detailing numerous problems with Windstream, and shared that letter with me. One line summed up the situation with Windstream that continues to frustrate both customers and me: "Your people on the front lines know how many problems you have. As the leader[s] of the company, why don't you?"

Another constituent from Pendergrass wrote me, "this company does not care because they don't have to." I have also received numerous letters detailing issues with service both within city limits and in rural areas. The complaints range across the telecommunications spectrum and often specific examples accompany these complaints. For example, in White County, GA, the fire department has been hampered from sending and receiving important public safety data because of poor Windstream connections.

The examples and complaints above are a small fraction of those that pour into my office from understandably frustrated customers. These issues have been ongoing and are well documented. Yet your response to problems and to my letters reflects either a lack of knowledge of the problems or a willful choice to ignore them.

I want to be clear that I am not questioning the loyalty, dedication, and hard work of Windstream employees. In fact, I find many of your responses to be offensive to their work. They are handicapped by a lack of infrastructure improvements and clear leadership, and I believe are working as effectively as they can with the means at their disposal.

While I appreciate the announcement of the initiatives in your letter, they do not negate the many other questions I have asked you previously. In fact, it appears that you sought to answer my questions with generalities about Windstream initiatives, rather than answering specific questions about various issues in the 9<sup>th</sup> District of Georgia. Since your response to my previous letter, problems have persisted despite the initiatives you announced. To that end, I would like to once again request a response to the questions below, in addition to new questions that have arisen. My constituents and your customers deserve answers to these questions.

- I am concerned that your networks in Northeast Georgia are at over-capacity. Would you agree with this assessment? If not, please provide documentation demonstrating that Northeast Georgia networks specifically are not operating at over-capacity. If they are, please outline your plan to address this situation. Please include data on operations at peak hours, and whether there is an over-capacity problem at peak hours.
- Please provide a detailed status update regarding Windstream's progress upgrading your copper networks to modern fiber in Northeast Georgia. Specifically, what percentage of the copper network has been replaced and what is the timeline for full replacement with modern fiber?
- Of the fees that you currently collect from Windstream subscribers in Northeast Georgia, what percentage are being used to upgrade infrastructure in the same area as those subscribers?
- In 2014, Windstream was granted Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) status by the Internal Revenue Service. Based on media reports at the time, Windstream's tax savings from this change in status was estimated to cut your company's debt \$3.2 billion and produce \$115 million annually in free cash flow. What is your estimated tax savings to date from REIT status, and what percentage of that estimated savings have you invested in broadband upgrades, both nationally and specifically in the 9<sup>th</sup> Congressional District of Georgia?
- Please provide a detailed listing of the location and frequency of outages in Northeast Georgia for the past year, and what you are doing to address this issue.

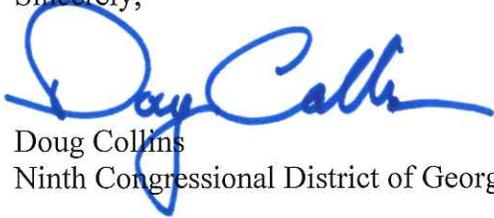
It's past time that Windstream address the numerous concerns expressed by the thousands of affected customers in Northeast Georgia. I once again respectfully urge to you take meaningful and real steps to serve your customers in Northeast Georgia. I will continue to voice and act on these concerns until I feel that my constituents have been not only heard, but responded to.

Page -3 Mr. Tony Thomas

I believe Windstream still has work to do in taking its responsibility to rural communities and communities within city limits seriously, and I will continue to press for answers and changes as long as your company accepts federal funding for promises you fail to deliver.

I appreciate your attention to this matter. I look forward to both a written response and the chance to discuss in depth the issues highlighted above at our upcoming meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Doug Collins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "C".

Doug Collins  
Ninth Congressional District of Georgia