

GILES CHICHESTER MEP

for South West England and Gibraltar

PRESS LETTER

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Dear Editor,

RURAL MOBILE PHONE COVERAGE

The problem of poor mobile phone coverage in the rural South West is regularly raised at my constituency meetings with farmers, businessmen and service providers. Complaints about “hot spots” where no phone coverage is available and poor connections where phone signals break down are common, seriously affecting residents and having a detrimental effect on the South West economy. Poor mobile phone reception results in increased administration costs for business and often the loss of commercial contracts worth many millions of pounds.

This Government is very much aware of the problems and is working with the mobile phone industry to resolve them as well as making available additional funding to rectify the situation. The European Commission is also concerned and currently is investigating the implementation of reforms to the telecommunications market, including the abolition of mobile phone roaming charges to provide improved mobile phone coverage. To accelerate action, it is however necessary for phone users to provide real evidence of the extent of the problem. The Countryside Alliance has taken up this challenge and is working with the digital technology company Root Metric to produce a map, using information provided by phone users which will give a true picture of rural mobile phone coverage. The Alliance is asking mobile phone users to download a free Root Metrics App onto their smart phone or tablet and use it to check the strength of the phone signals in their area. The App tests results are automatically recorded on the map. The Alliance is now receiving almost 100,000 reports daily on mobile phone reception which is providing the necessary information to reveal the full extent and details of the problems.

I would ask everyone to help with this work by downloading the Root Metric App to provide the Countryside Alliance with the evidence to take to Government and the European Commission to assist them take the action necessary to improve mobile phone reception in rural areas of our Region. Information on how to use the free App and to see the results can be obtained from the website www.rootmetrics.com/uk or by contacting the Countryside Alliance on 020 7840 8250. It is important that all mobile phone users help with this project.



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Conservatives in the European Parliament