



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT of RESOURCES and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE of the COMMISSIONER
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GEORGE M. BALD
Commissioner

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March 23, 2010

The Honorable Larry Strickling
Assistant Secretary of Communications and Information
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Re: Broadband Technology Opportunities Program, Broadband Initiatives Program

On behalf of the Department of the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development, I am writing in support of the application submitted for the Network New Hampshire Now (NNHN) initiative under the Broadband Opportunities Technology Program (BTOP). NNHN includes several projects designed to provide an open access, middle mile broadband infrastructure to needed stakeholders in the State. The University of New Hampshire is the designated applicant for the State of New Hampshire and will serve as the entity of authority during the implementation phase.

In this proposal, there are projects devoted to the last mile, the middle mile, higher education, public safety and telemedicine. The comprehensive structure presented is designed for timely implementation within the boundaries of funding, and the results will be impressive. We feel that UNH has crafted a thoughtful approach to address a need for widespread broadband availability - what we consider to be one of the largest economic drivers within our State.

We believe the recent notice by NTIA conveyed a strong message encouraging participation and the involvement of core institutions. Over the last year and a half, we are pleased to see that the appropriate players have been at the table, and have been directly involved with the crafting of the proposed middle mile pathway. In anticipation of this opportunity, all partners entered this process with a single focus—to provide open, reliable, and cost effective broadband to those stakeholders in need. Most importantly, it sets the stage by which further deployment can be realized, which in turns stimulates economic development in critical areas of the State.

In addition to the middle mile solution, the proposal before you also includes funding for the State's Broadband Director, which will be housed in NH Department of Resources and Economic Development. This position was created during the last funding cycle through the temporary use of discretionary stimulus funds provided to the Governor. All involved with telecommunications recognize that the position is no longer an option, but is a critical necessity if the State hopes to meet a goal of providing affordable broadband to all citizens. This position will have direct responsibility to coordinate with the numerous projects and partners required to exercise the deployment of this grant and other efforts. We cannot stress enough the importance of this position, both from a state perspective, but also from the point of view of the President's efforts to provide broadband for all.

Another aspect of this proposal is the Middle Mile IP Backbone Network which will deliver broadband services to existing and future state agencies and core institutions. Many of our public entities depend upon our mountaintops to deliver voice and data communication via wireless; particularly in times of emergency response. The State of NH has demonstrated a commitment towards emergency response communications; however the extent to which fiber can be deployed on mountaintops is logistically difficult and not cost effective. The wireless microwave proposal provides a solution that is made even better given the willingness of partner agencies to combine their efforts and share their resources. Given the emphasis of the NOFA that proposals should address public safety, we believe the Microwave solution is tailor-made to benefit from NTIA funding.

The Network New Hampshire Project being proposed represents a visionary approach for key stakeholders and provides real opportunity to stimulate affordable deployment to needed rural areas of the State. The relationships forged during this process have been powerful, and I speak for my fellow agencies and partner organizations in saying that the cooperative approach present in the development of this grant will be the formula for success during implementation. We have an opportunity to affect the direction of the State by employing a project which is thoughtful and sustainable. We hope that you will share in this vision.

We urge you to consider this application for funding and I look forward to working with our partners to assist in its implementation.

Sincerely,



George M. Bald
Commissioner

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