

March 22, 2010

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

Dear Assistant Secretary Strickling:

As President of Granite State College of the University System of New Hampshire, it is a pleasure for me to endorse Network New Hampshire Now (#4248). This is a statewide proposal submitted by the University of New Hampshire to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Broadband Technologies Opportunities Program (BTOP) Round 2 program.

The mission of Granite State College is to provide access to public higher education to adult learners of all ages throughout the state of New Hampshire. An important component of this mission is to deliver courses and programs online to students in all areas of the state including those living in the urban parts of NH and those who reside in the north-country where the population is small and fewer resources are available. All residents of NH, including those who live in the northern and western tiers, should have access to high speed internet. By having greater connectivity at an affordable price, adults living in the northern and western parts of the state would be more able to access our associate and baccalaureate programs and receive the education and training that would expand their career options. Demographic studies show that unemployment rates are higher and the percent of residents with a college degree lower in the northern and western parts of NH as compared to the southern and eastern sections of the state. Higher education that is affordable and accessible is a key to improving these metrics and making residents more employable.

The ability of Granite State College to fully meet its access mission in all parts of the state is dependent upon robust and reliable broadband connectivity. We rely on broadband to effectively deliver our academic programs and courses to adults seeking to advance in their careers or learn a new set of skills that will provide new opportunities in the workforce.

For these reasons, Granite State College is committed to New Hampshire's efforts at constructing the Network New Hampshire Now Project. We encourage the funding and construction of this project, and we look forward to being a participant in the finished network.

Sincerely,

Karol A. LaCroix
Karol A. LaCroix
President

