

Virginia M. Barry, Ph.D.  
Commissioner of Education  
Tel. 603-271-3144



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
101 Pleasant Street  
Concord, N.H. 03301  
FAX 603-271-1953  
Citizens Services Line 1-800-339-9900

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, DC 20230

Dear Assistant Secretary Strickling:

New Hampshire is committed to increasing success in secondary education and increasing the number of students who enter and succeed college. The New Hampshire P-16 initiative has ambitious goals and objectives that are aligned to meet the specific educational needs of New Hampshire citizens. While the drive to provide access to education at all levels is great, the broadband to facilitate online learning and academic support services in this rural state is not.

On behalf of the New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE), I want to express our commitment to the statewide broadband proposal submitted by the University of New Hampshire to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Broadband Technologies Opportunities Program (BTOP), Round 2. The NHDOE, like the Community College System and the University System, is impacted directly by lack of available connectivity and by the high cost of connectivity due to insufficient supply and inadequate price competition in New Hampshire.

As Commissioner of Education, the importance of broadband access is critical to preparing our state's students for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. As I travel to the more rural parts of our state, I am deeply concerned about the lack of access our students and communities have to technology. The NHDOE is committed to supporting and helping to provide resources to our students. It is my belief that given the current economic climate, it is critical to provide broadband access in our schools.

The Honorable Larry Strickling  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
March 22, 2010 ~ Page Two

Robust and reliable broadband connectivity is critical to education in New Hampshire. We rely on broadband access to communicate with our schools, parents and provide professional development for our teachers and leaders. Broadband access offers our students connectivity to other states and exposure to international activities. We are currently unable to expand our services due to inadequate access to reliable and affordable broadband services. The Network New Hampshire Project being proposed by the statewide partner group led by the University of New Hampshire will be extremely useful for us, and hence to our students, their families, and our teachers who have the desire for continuing education, so that we can provide the highest quality of educational services to the state.

While the NHDOE has limited resources, we will continue to develop grants to leverage federal funds to work closely with businesses to engage their support and continue the broadband access.

As a member of the statewide P-16 educational partnership, the New Hampshire Department of Education is enthusiastically committed to New Hampshire's efforts at constructing the Network New Hampshire Project. We encourage the funding and construction of this project, and we look forward to being a customer of the finished network.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Virginia M. Barry".

Virginia M. Barry, Ph.D.  
Commissioner of Education