August 12, 2009

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 Infrastructure-RUS

Dear Mr. Strickling:

On behalf of the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development, I am writing in support of the Northern Community Investment Corporation (NCIC) Wireless LINC Project, and their application for funding under the RUS Broadband Initiatives Program. Our own State submission considers this project to be of such critical importance to an area in need that we link to the project within our own application, and consider the project to be a companion submittal.

We recognize that access to broadband at the community level is a powerful driver of economic growth and opportunity. The North Country of New Hampshire faces challenges exacerbated by the lack of broadband. The physical beauty of the mountaintops is offset by the challenges of reaching those who are dispersed, and those who need access to grow their business. This part of our State faces unprecedented challenges brought about by the economic times, and we believe the expansion of broadband services utilizing NCIC’s wireless technology is a means by which activity can be stimulated, and which will complement the economic development efforts at both the municipal and State level. Their project is estimated to increase the employment in the area by at least 375 FTE’s; and will service an additional 3,800 households.

NCIC has formed collaborative agreements with the largest commercial vendor in the State, Fairpoint Communications, as both entities work together to solve the needs of the North. We consider this collaborative approach to be an excellent investment, and we urge you to consider funding the project. Together, both parties will address the need for middle/last mile, in what is considered to be the most remote portions of New Hampshire.

As we progress with statewide broadband efforts, we will continue to partner with NCIC and Wireless LINC, and will utilize their expertise and approach as we consider other projects designed to increase deployment and penetration rates throughout New Hampshire.

Sincerely,

George M. Bald
Commissioner

GMB:lc