



PROMOTE. PROTECT. EDUCATE.

March 8, 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:

We understand that a statewide broadband proposal, Network New Hampshire, is being submitted by the University of New Hampshire to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Broadband Technologies Opportunities Program (BTOP) Round 2 program.

The New Hampshire Restaurant & Lodging Association (NHRLA) is very supportive of this proposal, as access to broadband across the state of New Hampshire continues to be a significant challenge for Association members. NHRLA is a statewide association of roughly 700 members dedicated to the hospitality industry in New Hampshire. A few of our primary objectives are to pursue the following areas; Legislative advocacy, Educational initiatives and the Promotion of hospitality, travel and tourism. These objectives can be hampered by the lack of sufficient middle and last-mile connectivity in associate member locations as well as rural areas – particularly in northern NH.

NHLRA often receives complaints from outlying areas that the lack of broadband hampers their ability to offer top rate services to their customers and to remain competitive with surrounding states. The Network New Hampshire proposal being submitted in Round 2 would provide the conduit for local jobs and economic growth.

The lack of dark fiber transport available for carriers is a primary cause of the limited availability of rural broadband services in New Hampshire. This in turn will increase tourism and business travel throughout the State.

For these reasons, I wholeheartedly support the Network New Hampshire proposal. If funded, we intend to recommend to our members the availability to utilize these broadband services to bring opportunities to all of New Hampshire.

Sincerely,

Mike Somers  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
New Hampshire Lodging & Restaurant Association  
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