



March 24, 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

Re: **Network New Hampshire Now/NH FastRoads (#4248)**

Dear Assistant Secretary Strickling:

On behalf of the New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority's (CDFA), I am pleased to offer our support as a partner with the University of New Hampshire and New Hampshire FastRoads (FastRoads) to submit a joint application for the statewide broadband proposal titled Network New Hampshire Now/NH FastRoads (#4248) submitted by the University of New Hampshire to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Broadband Technologies Opportunities Program (BTOP) Round 2 program. As a community development organization, CDFA is excited about the opportunity to bring broadband to New Hampshire residents and businesses. The CDFA is engaged in financing and funding critical projects that address the pressing challenges faced by low- and moderate-income citizens and communities of our state. We are well aware that lack of access to adequate broadband services leaves thousands of our businesses, school children and community institutions behind – effectively ensuring that we can't compete!

CDFA/FastRoads will create a statewide revolving loan fund/equity fund and will use earnings in the Southwest/West Central region to finance expansion of the last mile network in the region, to provide technical assistance and seed capital to replicate the FastRoads approach in the next region, and the next until we can reach the entire state. CDFA/FastRoads will continue to work with the NH Fiber Network partners and will reach out to other service providers as well to further this work.

Additionally, I believe CDFA is in a position to help finance or fund the solution. A FastRoads broadband application falls under the funding guidelines for two programs that CDFA operates, one federal (Community Development Block Grant) and one state (Business Tax Credit). Though awards are made on a competitive basis under both programs, Monadnock Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) has been and continues to be a strong partner for CDFA and as such has secured a number of awards under both the CDBG and Business Tax Credit programs. CDFA has previously invested \$1 million in two separate tax credit awards to Northern Communities Investment Corporation (NCIC) for its Wireless LINC, wireless broadband project in northern NH. It is not unreasonable to assume that a request from MEDC for broadband activities would be highly competitive.

This project is the critical foundation for the State of New Hampshire as it seeks to build its economy and economic opportunity, particularly for citizens and communities of low- or moderate-income. I wholeheartedly support this proposal and hope that you will call if you have questions or need further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katharine Bogle Shields". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Katharine Bogle Shields
Executive Director

"Investing In A Better New Hampshire"

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