



VITAL COMMUNITIES

104 Railroad Row, White River Junction, Vermont 05001 PHONE: (802) 291-9100 FAX: (802) 291-9107
E-MAIL: info@vitalcommunities.org WEB SITE: www.vitalcommunities.org

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March 18, 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:

On behalf of the Corporate Council, I wish to express our commitment to the joint statewide broadband proposal submitted by the University of New Hampshire. The State of New Hampshire will be submitting a joint application on behalf of several colleges and universities as well as NH FastRoads, a community broadband effort, to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Broadband Technologies Opportunities Program (BTOP) Round 2 program. Members of the Corporate Council are 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.

The membership of the Corporate Council is comprised of key decision makers from across a wide spectrum of businesses and institutions in the Upper Valley region of New Hampshire and Vermont. It is a private organization. Collectively, the members represent approximately forty-six percent of the region's job force. The Corporate Council meets every other month to discuss regional issues impacting the vibrant economy.

The Corporate Council has been tracking the issue of very high speed connectivity for the past eighteen months. Robust and reliable broadband connectivity is critical to our member organizations. After careful analysis we have concluded the lack of universal high speed internet service puts this region at a serious disadvantage in relation to other parts of the world. Among other problems, the lack of universal very high speed connectivity causes us to suffer loss of productivity. It also makes it more difficult for us to recruit qualified applicants for our high paying jobs in our industries of education, health care, services, and manufacturing.

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.

For these reasons, the members of the Corporate Council are enthusiastically committed to New Hampshire's efforts at constructing the Network New Hampshire Project and NH FastRoads. We encourage the funding and construction of this project, and we look forward to being customers of the finished network.

Sincerely,



James Varnum

Chair, Corporate Council

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