August 19, 2009

The Honorable Lawrence E. Strickling  
Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information  
National Telecommunications and Information Administration  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave. NW  
Washington D.C. 20230

Dear Assistant Secretary Strickling:

On behalf of New Hampshire’s Southwest Region Planning Commission and the 35 communities within our region, please accept this letter of support for the application for the deployment of broadband infrastructure to the underserved and unserved towns of New Hampshire submitted by the State of New Hampshire under the Broadband Opportunities Technology Program (BTOP).

It is understood that one part of the proposal is for the State to work with vendors to deploy broadband into areas that are either unserved or underserved. The southwestern portion of New Hampshire has certainly been challenged by a lack of broadband service, and the citizens of our region will benefit from the last mile proposals for wireless and fiber expansion contained within the proposal, as well as the opportunities for tele-health and access to higher education resources.

Our enthusiasm to support this project is fueled in part by the importance that access to high speed broadband infrastructure has in our state and individual communities. Broadband access stimulates job creation and growth; expands educational opportunities for young people; enables town offices, police departments, fire departments, libraries, and schools to better serve the community and communicate effectively; and increases market access for businesses. Simply put, broadband is essential infrastructure to our quality of life.

In addition to supporting the State’s infrastructure proposal, the nine regional planning commissions have been working with the State of New Hampshire and Complex Systems Research Center of UNH in submitting a proposal to the NTIA’s State Broadband Data and Development Grant Program and we are ready to embark as a full partner in that collaborative effort. Additionally, it has been recognized by the project partners that collaboration between the two applications for broadband mapping and infrastructure deployment will serve the efforts of each project. As service providers and the State work to expand the middle-mile and interconnection backbone, the locations and service at those locations will be verified and added to the mapping data set.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal. If you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Michael Blair  
GIS Consultant

cc: Edward Smith, Program Director, NTIA  
Christopher Way, DRED  
Scott Valcourt, UNH