August 18, 2009

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

Dear Assistant Secretary Strickling:

On behalf of the New Hampshire National Guard (NHNG), I am writing in support of the State of New Hampshire application under the Broadband Opportunities Technology (BTOP) and Broadband Initiatives Programs (BIP). This comprehensive proposal addresses the opportunity in New Hampshire to provide broadband internet access to under and un-served communities. One of our project partners, The University of New Hampshire, is the designated applicant for the State of New Hampshire and will coordinate execution of this project.

In 2008, the NHNG signed a memorandum of agreement with the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development to provide mountaintop communications tower access in order to build a wireless wide area network connecting fifteen Army readiness centers and Pease Air National Guard Base to our Joint Forces Headquarters in Concord, NH. This wireless network was to replace existing circuits that are not only expensive, but are insufficient to meet communications requirements needed for effective response to State emergencies.

During the course of extensive discussion with other state agencies and FairPoint Communications, the NHNG was presented an alternative to completion of this wireless network. Pending your agency’s approval of New Hampshire’s proposal, NHNG communications requirements will be met using existing fiber optic circuits, precluding our need for additional mountaintop communications tower space. The NHNG will be better able to fulfill our public safety missions while saving over $190,000 each year in recurring circuit costs. In return, this public-private joint effort will enable commercial broadband service providers to use the freed tower space to make the infrastructure improvements needed to provide affordable
access to robust and reliable broadband products and services where such access isn’t available now.

This project represents extensive collaboration and ongoing dialog between diverse state agencies and commercial stakeholders. The New Hampshire National Guard urges you to consider this application for funding and I look forward to working with our partners to assist in its implementation.

William N. Reddel III
Major General, NH National Guard
The Adjutant General