



State of New Hampshire

DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY

John J. Barthelmes, Commissioner of Safety

Division of State Police

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Colonel Frederick H. Booth
Director

March 19, 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 New Hampshire State Police, I wish to express our commitment to the statewide broadband proposal submitted by the University of New Hampshire to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Broadband Technologies Opportunities Program (BTOP) Round 2 program. As you no doubt are aware, the New Hampshire State Police is a provider of public safety services throughout the entire State of New Hampshire. As such, the Division is a heavy user of broadband Internet services that assist Division members with everything from criminal investigations to the gathering of intelligence data dealing with Homeland Security. It also provides a rapid and efficient resource in which to communicate out to Division personnel and the general public whom we serve. Given the current coverage limitation within our State, we have found that a fair number of communities that we serve and in which our Troopers reside, do not have access to broadband internet services, which not only severely hinders our ability to effectively and efficiently perform our job responsibilities but also impacts local Law Enforcement agencies and their ability to do the same. While the hybrid fiber / microwave network being proposed will substantially expand Internet access into areas not previously covered it is worth noting that it will also provide a critical fault tolerant backbone for public safety throughout the State of New Hampshire.

The proposal that is before you also addresses the need to pursue and expand upon opportunities that exist within data-casting. Data-casting is the term being used to describe the transmission of data that can be encoded into the excess bandwidth left-over from digital television signals currently in use. Excess bandwidth provides for data transfer rates of up to 1 Mb/sec and this can be accomplished with relatively inexpensive equipment. It is also worth noting that the data being transmitted in this manner can be fully encrypted and can also be targeted to specific receivers operating within the television station coverage area. This technology and the opportunity to work with the broadcasting community to expand in this area is essential to public safety in general, but especially to public safety agencies and personnel here in New Hampshire. With that in mind, please note that one of the partners in this application, New Hampshire Public Television, has committed to providing data-casting services for public safety through its statewide network of Digital Television stations. This is a tremendous opportunity that must be pursued.

In New Hampshire, not unlike many other areas around the country, it is virtually impossible for law enforcement, as well as Fire / EMS, agencies to acquire any additional communications frequencies within the bandwidth specifically having been set aside for this purpose. In 1996, given these limitations, the New Hampshire State Police was one of the first agencies in the country to begin building an APCO25 radio infrastructure and network that would specifically facilitate the broadcasting of both data and analog (voice) over the same frequency. While successful in it's mission of providing important Officer Safety related data out to the cruiser, we quickly realized that a data transmission speed of only 9.6 Kb/sec would severely limit our ability to transmit digital images of fleeing suspects, escapees, victims of kidnap, or even an elderly Alzheimer patient that may have wandered away from home, or health care facility. With a current data transmission speed of only 9.6 Kb/sec, information such as building floor plans, or geographical area layout, could not readily be transmitted to responding public safety personnel who may find themselves having to deal with an armed suspect(s) in a public building, such as a school, or on one of the many College / University campuses here in the State. Such limitations could severely affect the outcome and number of casualties associated with such high-risk events. It is also worth noting that there are no other state-wide alternatives available to public safety personnel, such as cellular technologies which don't provide statewide coverage, due in large part to the geographical terrain here in our State and the population concentrations which lie primarily in the southern part of the State. Circumstances such as these make it highly unlikely that commercial providers of this technology will expand to the northern regions of the State significantly over the next decade.

For these reasons, we here at the New Hampshire State Police are enthusiastically committed to the statewide broadband proposal submitted by the University of New Hampshire to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Broadband Technologies Opportunities Program (BTOP) Round 2 program. We strongly encourage the funding and construction of this project, and we look forward to being a customer of the finished network project. Thank you so much for your time and consideration in this regard.

Sincerely,



Colonel Frederick H. Booth

Director

New Hampshire State Police