State of West Virginia

Joe Manchin III

Governor

Office of the Governor
State Capitol
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East
Charleston, WV 25305

Telephone: (304) 558-2000
Toll Free: 1-888-438-2731
FAX: (304) 342-7025
www.wvgov.org

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The Honorable Lawrence E. Strickling
Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Telecommunications and Information Administration

Dear Mr. Strickling:

The letter I received from you on March 24th invites states to comment on the geographic regions within the state that should receive priority from the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) for project funding. You also offered the opportunity to comment on specific applications for funding to the NTIA. I thank you for these opportunities and will take you up on both counts because broadband is critical to West Virginia.

West Virginia does not have a geographical region that is sufficiently provided with broadband or with broadband adoption programs. With the grant award from the first round of NTIA funding, many needs for service for critical access infrastructure will be met – and for this, West Virginia could not be more grateful. But considering the topography and rural nature of West Virginia, and considering its demographic challenges, West Virginia is truly unique among the 50 states. As you are aware, West Virginia has been dedicated to the deployment and utilization of broadband since January 2007 when I announced the initiative in the State of the State address. By early 2008, I introduced legislation creating the Broadband Deployment Council, and the state has not looked back. We are a state that has been studying and cataloging its needs and assets for better than three years and are positioned to take advantage and deploy both service and adoption programs.

What was most gratifying for me to see when the second round applications were reviewed was the ability for this state to leverage NTIA's investment to ensure that broadband will both be deployed and adopted. Further, I believe that healthy competition for broadband service will help drive down the cost of broadband, which is in many regions too high for widespread adoption, particularly for our small businesses.

All of the executive summaries listed at the website address provided in your letter, https://www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandgrants/applicaiotns/results.cfm?org=&keywords=&grantround=2id=&program=BTOP&state=&projstates=WV&status, were reviewed by my broadband team and checked for additional entries as late as April 30, 2010. In making these recommendations, I am not commenting against an application not included – indeed many of the applications seem worthy, but it was not possible to judge the impact or relevance to West Virginia from the executive summaries. I am willing to consider further information or provide additional information with respect to a project affecting West Virginia if this would be of any assistance to you and to NTIA.

I would like to highly recommend the following applications:

1. One Economy Corporation's Statewide <u>Broadband Adoption Program for West Virginia</u>
    Easy Grant ID: 5136
    Type: Sustainable Adoption

    West Virginia worked very closely with One Economy during the entire application process. West Virginia and One Economy actually envisioned this project during Round 1 of NTIA's grant process, but when the scope of the opportunity was fully developed, it became clear that the project merited its own application. The state and One Economy secured over $4 million in cash and in-kind services to make this application. This application, which provides for the comprehensive and sustainable adoption of broadband adoption is specifically designed to leverage NTIA's investment in the state through its grant to provide broadband access to all state supported critical access infrastructure and pair it with One Economy's expertise in adoption strategies. The approach addresses three critical needs: content, training, and affordable access. West Virginia and One Economy are so enthusiastic about this partnership and the possibilities that we jointly held the first stakeholders meeting on April 29 to pave the way for this exciting partnership.

2. West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission's <u>WV ION – The West Virginia Intrastate Optical Network for Education and Research</u>
    Easy Grant ID: 7537
    Type: Middle Mile

    This application also seeks to capitalize on the infrastructure build already under way in West Virginia. Working in connection with various stakeholders familiar with the state's NTIA award and existing infrastructure and needs, this proposal will ensure that all higher education institutions have robust broadband service. Higher education is critical to West Virginia. Education and distance education are essential to make sure that our population is ready and trained to the challenges of the new economy. This application levels the playing field for West Virginia and its unique demographics.

3. CityNet, LLC's <u>West Virginia Broadband Initiative</u>
   Easy Grant ID: 4548
   Type: Middle Mile

   The private sector has identified a lack of middle mile infrastructure in 18 West Virginia counties in the north central region of the state. The goal is to maximize broadband enablement in the service area. The state believes that this is necessary to enhance competition and provide technology options through the proposed creation of a fiber optic network with a system of internet backbone routers.

4. Hancock County Board of Education's <u>Building Blocks to 21st Century Learning</u>
   Easy Grant ID: 7101
   Type: Sustainable Adoption

   The Hancock County Board of Education is taking an aggressive approach to educating both students and the community in the use of broadband technologies and the internet. This type of broad, community approach that utilizes public facilities is a proven way to increase sustainable adoption. West Virginia supports all of its schools that take an initiative in this manner.

5. Clarendon Foundation Inc.'s <u>Carrier-Neutral Fiber Optic & Microwave Broadband Transport</u>
   Easy Grant ID: 7456
   Type: Comprehensive Community Infrastructure

   This project addresses broadband deployment in two rural West Virginia counties utilizing a redundant fiber-microwave middle-mile network. This application is designed to use technology in a novel way to bring down the cost of internet access and provide for a range of last mile solutions. West Virginia needs to explore these technology solutions to be able to provide robust, affordable broadband solutions to homes and businesses.

I would like to recommend the following projects:
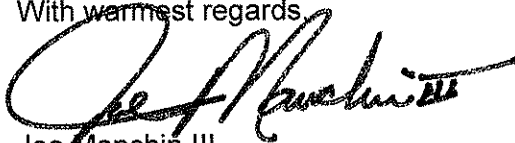
1. Genoa Service's <u>Broadband Enabled Remote Guidance System for the Visually Impaired (Insight Platform)</u>
   Easy Grant ID: 6911
   Type: Sustainable Adoption

2. County Executives Telecommunications Initiative's <u>County Executives Telecommunications Network (CETN), formerly County Executives Television Network</u>
   Easy Grant ID: 7027
   Type: Sustainable Adoption

3. One Economy Corp's <u>HUD Broadband Adoption Initiative</u>
   Easy Grant ID: 6935
   Type: Sustainable Adoption

4. LogicLink, Inc.'s <u>Computer Services to Justifying Sustainable Middle and Last Mile Infrastructure to Rural Areas</u>
   Easy Grant ID: 7542
   Type: Comprehensive Community Infrastructure

5. Communication Service for the Deaf, Inc.'s <u>Project Endeavor</u>
   Easy Grant ID: 6814
   Type: Sustainable Adoption

6. University Corporation for Advanced Internet Development's <u>United States Unified Community Anchor Network (U.S. UCAN)</u>
   Easy Grant ID: 4589
   Type: Comprehensive Community Infrastructure

7. XW's <u>Broadband Ubiquity via Adaptive Filter Bank Modulation</u>
   Easy Grant ID: 6677
   Type: Sustainable Adoption

Thank you for the opportunity to express again how important broadband access and adoption is to West Virginia and for your kind attention to the applications for broadband service and deployment in West Virginia. The state could not be more grateful to you and to NTIA for these opportunities. Should you have any questions or require any additional information, I will be happy to assist you in any way.

With warmest regards,

Joe Manchin III
Governor