

M. JODI RELL
GOVERNOR

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

October 14, 2009

Lawrence Strickling
Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
United States Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Strickling:

I want to thank you for the opportunity to evaluate and provide comments on the proposals put forth for funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009's Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP).

As you are well aware, hundreds upon hundreds of worthy projects have been proposed across the country to expand and enhance broadband availability, service and utilization. Broadband is one of those tools that brings with it great potential to transform our economy, advance academic achievement, improve the delivery of health care and grow tomorrow's workforce today.

To further broadband initiatives, the Recovery Act makes available billions of dollars to worthwhile broadband initiatives across the country. As part of the funding review process, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has provided the state of Connecticut information on the BTOP applications that could potentially serve areas throughout the state.

Connecticut's review process involved gathering input and feedback from a variety of perspectives. Those who participated in this process included municipal officials, state agency representatives and individuals familiar with communications technologies. While the reviewers looked at the array of proposals that could potentially benefit Connecticut, the feedback focused mainly on those broadband initiatives that could directly benefit the citizens of Connecticut.

The broadband initiatives submitted to NTIA specific to Connecticut include proposals to enhance the state's education network, further public safety coordination and enforcement in our communities, provide greater broadband access to individuals of all walks of life, strengthen health care delivery systems and connect residents to jobs. The state of Connecticut strongly supports all of these initiatives.

The specific proposals are:

City of Hartford – seeking funds to provide greater broadband access throughout the community by connecting community organizations and businesses to the City’s existing network;

AlphaStar America (Greenwich) – seeking funds to address middle-mile access challenges through a hybrid approach linking wired or wireless last mile networks with a satellite middle mile;

Town of Manchester (3 applications) – seeking funds to connect a number of Connecticut municipalities for purposes of expanding and enhancing present day broadband architecture. The resulting network would support education and public safety technology while providing greater overall public access to broadband applications through computer centers;

New Haven Housing Authority (2 applications) – seeking funds to enhance broadband access in one of Connecticut’s major metropolitan areas. The funding would be utilized to create two distinct public computer centers – potentially providing broadband access for thousand and thousands of individuals throughout the region;

Department of Information Technology (East Hartford) – seeking funds to significantly advance the state’s current Education Network and public safety communications system. Aspects of the project will reach into some of the state’s more rural areas where broadband service is limited;

West Hartford Public Library – seeking funds to connect into the town’s existing fiber network, thereby enhancing internet services for residents in this community – connecting them to educational offerings, job and training opportunities; and

Yale New Haven Health Services Corporation – seeking funds to further utilization of health information technology tools that will provide for better overall care of children in the Greater New Haven area.

These proposals are likely to have direct and positive impacts on the residents of Connecticut. Some build off of existing approaches to better serve areas in Connecticut where access to broadband is limited, while other approaches seek to address connectivity challenges through new approaches. What is true of all of these proposals is that they are well thought out and will significantly enhance the availability and utilization of broadband throughout Connecticut.

In addition to the submissions specific to Connecticut, there are a number of other proposals that could potentially benefit the residents of this state as well as the entire country. These applications include:

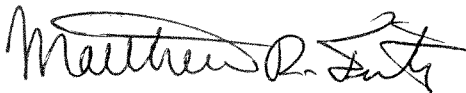
Hispanic Information and Telecommunications Network (Brooklyn, NY); One Economy Corporation (Washington, D.C.); Broadband for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Washington, D.C.); SeniorNet (Herndon, VA); Public Safety Foundation of America (Daytona Beach, FL); National Emergency Number Association (Arlington, VA); Megapath (Costa Mesa, CA); RADGOV (Fort Lauderdale, FL); Acorn Technologies (Santa Monica, CA); and RovAir (Reading, MA).

These are amongst the many broadband projects worthy of funding consideration by the NTIA. A number of the efforts look to address the challenges of adoption and affordability – especially in urban areas – such as the Hispanic Information and Telecommunications Network and One Economy applications. Others seek to strengthen the safety net for some of our most vulnerable citizens – such as the approaches sponsored by SeniorNet and Broadband for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Overall, these proposals cover a broad spectrum of approaches to expanding the deployment of broadband service throughout the country – connecting more and more people to this value tool.

Thank you, once again, for the opportunity to provide feedback on these broadband applications. The Recovery Act funding presents a unique opportunity to advance broadband availability and utilization throughout Connecticut and across the nation.

If you have any questions, or, if I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at (860) 524-7309 or matt.fritz@ct.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew R. Fritz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a stylized "F".

Matthew Fritz
Special Assistant to the Governor
Office of Governor M. Jodi Rell
State of Connecticut

cc: Ian Martinez