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Governor



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May 3, 2010

Mr. Lawrence E. Strickling
Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information
National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
U.S. Department of Commerce
Herbert C. Hoover Building (HCHB)
1401 Constitution Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Mr. Strickling:

Thank you for inviting Washington State to comment on the broadband stimulus applications submitted to NTIA for the second wave of broadband funding. I am pleased to submit to you my recommendations for Washington.

In our review, we applied the objectives of the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP); the rules for the second wave of BTOP funding issued by the United States Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA); and the recommendations described in the Governor's Broadband Advisory Council (GBAC) Report, as guidelines.

Your state consultation letter requests that states differentiate their recommendations into two categories: recommended and highly recommended. Your letter also suggested it would be helpful to NTIA if comments were provided about why these particular applications serve our state's best interests. We have done both, as I wish to make every effort to advocate on behalf of these worthy applicants.



Highly Recommended Proposals

The following proposals not only met the federal program objectives and Washington's broadband priorities, but also stood out as being the most valuable to the state and the most likely to be successfully executed:

- *Northwest Open Access Network, State of Washington Broadband Consortium, Comprehensive Community Infrastructure proposal requesting a grant of \$55,280,797. (Easygrants ID: 5376)*

This is the highest ranked proposal and meets all seven of the BTOP Comprehensive Community Infrastructure criteria. The proposal would complement the network newly funded by the first wave grant to NoaNet by extending the NoaNet network to support additional middle mile and last mile builds to unserved and underserved areas in the south central, southeast, and northeast parts of the state. Many of these areas have challenging terrains where broadband infrastructure would likely not otherwise be built. These are areas that are economically depressed with income levels well below and unemployment well above the state averages. When completed, the network will reach 283 anchor institutions and over 55 economically depressed communities. The project will create a valuable platform for private investment in last mile infrastructure, thereby helping create a level playing field between urban and rural areas of the state. The project will enhance public safety and ensure high capacity access to every community college in Washington. The application also receives my strongest endorsement because it is proposed by an entity that has an existing track record of successful deployment and expertise; involves a public-private partnership; was developed in consultation with numerous public and private stakeholders; and is coordinated with meritorious projects proposed by other applicants.

- *Puget Sound Center Foundation for Teaching, Learning, and Technology, Stimulating Broadband-Enabled Economic Growth in Underserved Washington Communities, Public Computer Center proposal requesting grant of \$4,169,734. (Easygrants ID: 5209)*

This proposal will expand the capacity of 37 public computing centers and establish five new public computing centers in areas of the state with limited technology access, low adoption rates and low-income and vulnerable populations. The proposal employs a proven access, training, and content model.

- *Puget Sound Center Foundation for Teaching, Learning, and Technology, Communities Connect Network, Sustainable Broadband Adoption proposal requesting grant of \$2,045,458. (Easygrants ID: 6321)*

This project creates state and local partnerships for training and support services that expand broadband adoption in more than 40 of Washington's most impoverished communities. It is highly recommended because it is well-thought out and complements and enhances a respected, existing anti-poverty program. It also complements the applicant's PCC proposal (Easygrants ID: 5209) and will result in a specialized open-content curriculum that can be made available to other economically vulnerable communities in Washington. The project is specifically designed to address all of the stated BTOP purposes.

- *Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Regional Broadband Education Project – PCC, Public Computer Center proposal requesting grant of \$5,231,723. (Easygrants ID: 5158)*

This project dovetails with the CCI proposal submitted by NoaNet and will provide a valuable public computing center in an area with high unemployment and a lack of economic opportunity. The area is largely agricultural with a large Hispanic population that displays a low adoption rate for broadband services. The large disparity in incomes within this area masks severe poverty and a significant need to improve the educational base. The proposal will provide the facilities for broadband access for the general public and the vulnerable populations in this challenged area.

- *Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Regional Broadband Education Project – SBA, Sustainable Broadband Adoption proposal requesting grant of \$3,524,059. (Easygrants ID: 5212)*

This proposal is also coordinated with and integral to the success of the NoaNet CCI proposal and the applicant's PCC proposal (Easygrants ID: 5158). As with the PCC proposal, this SBA proposal will provide broadband education and awareness in an area that has large vulnerable populations and is severely challenged economically.

Recommended Proposals

The following proposals are recommended because they meet the federal program's objectives and criteria and Washington's broadband priorities as described in my GBAC report:

- *Grays Harbor Public Development Authority "GHPDA" CCI Middle Mile Project, Comprehensive Community Infrastructure proposal requesting grant of \$16,700,000. (Easygrants ID: 6156)*

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This proposal was recommended in the first round of BTOP funding but was eliminated because of a technical flaw in the application. It is recommended again because it will bring valuable middle-mile infrastructure to an area that is trying to make a difficult transition from a timber-based economy and is still economically depressed. It is also a long distance from other economic centers. The project proposed would meet federal objectives and criteria, enhance public safety, and provide a valuable platform for private investment in last-mile facilities. The infrastructure proposed will connect with the NoaNet network and through it be able to reach the Internet and other areas of the state.

- *Port of Allyn, Computer Center North Mason, Public Computer Center proposal requesting grant of \$20,000. (Easygrants ID: 7070)*

This is a modest request that would set up a computer center to provide broadband access to support distance learning programs in an underserved rural part of the Olympic Peninsula with high unemployment and low incomes. The primary focus will be on non-English speaking, minority and low income populations.

I appreciate the opportunity to assist you in determining which of the proposals that best match Washington State's interests are ones NTIA should give priority in selecting projects for funding.

If you have any questions, please contact my Broadband Policy and Program Manager, Angela Wu at (360) 902-2983 or angela.wu@dis.wa.gov. Thank you again for taking into consideration our state's best interests.

Sincerely,



Christine O. Gregoire
Governor