



## **Nome Eskimo Community**

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April 29, 2010

The Honorable Gary Locke  
Secretary of Commerce  
United States Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20230

RE: Broadband Technology Opportunities Program, Broadband for the American Arctic  
Proposal, EasyGrants ID # 4581

Dear Secretary Locke:

I am writing in response to NTIA's request for comments from Native American tribes regarding pending applications for Recovery Act funding under the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP). The Nome Eskimo Community is the federally-recognized tribe serving the Nome area (census block groups 021800002003 and 021800002004).

We strongly support the Arctic Cable Company's Broadband for the American Arctic (BFAA) project, for the following reasons:

- BFAA will replace slow, unreliable satellite links with fiber optic cable, immediately and dramatically improving all communications. This will ensure that service in our community meets the goals of the FCC's new National Broadband Plan.
- Our community needs the improvements in distance education that BFAA will bring. We understand that Arctic Cable Company is partnering with the University of Alaska to directly serve the University's Northwest Campus in Nome. With this connection, our indigenous people can take advantage of resources world-wide while remaining in their community.
- Public safety relies on communications. In our remote area, the ability to communicate quickly and reliably is a matter of life and death.
- Fiber optic connectivity will finally offer high-speed broadband capabilities required to deliver critical telemedicine and economic development to our rural communities currently served only by inadequate satellite services.

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- We understand that BFAA has received all state and federal permits and approvals. We have been consulted on environmental issues and approve of the project approach.
- The project is designed to support the collection of real-time oceanic, fisheries, and climate data. As a community on the front lines of climate change effects, we look forward to a dramatic improvement in these research capabilities.

Thank you for your consideration of our views on this matter of critical importance to our community. Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bantu Nichols', written in a cursive style.

Bantu Nichols, Tribal Council President

cc: Lawrence Strickling, NTIA  
Ian Martinez, NTIA