

March 22, 2010

Lawrence E. Strickling
Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information
Administrator, National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20230-0002

RE: Humboldt Community Access Network (Humboldt CAN) broadband project
Round Two ARRA Project Proposal Support

Dear Assistant Secretary Strickling:

Telecommunications has become the central nervous system of the American economy. It has revolutionized virtually every aspect of our lives and every industry, from education and health care to banking and finance. People and communities lacking broadband services, such as many living in northern California, are disadvantaged in the same way people and communities without electricity or telephone service were disadvantaged in the first half of the twentieth century. Communities without broadband will have limited participation in the economic opportunities of the global market and limited access to healthcare, education and government. In addition, those people will have a lesser access to jobs, education, health care, government services and the other important amenities that broadband provides.

With this project we can build to a much brighter future for Humboldt County and nearby areas. The proposed project would complete a vital high speed broadband network throughout Humboldt County. Public safety, delivery of telemedicine services, cost-effective distance education and commercial activities are among those topical areas that will depend on and benefit from provision of broadband services in this state. The availability of high quality broadband delivered to end users further expands the reach of broadband into clinics, schools, businesses, public safety facilities and homes. This will bring heretofore unavailable access to many thousands and has the potential to positively increased factors of economic development and quality of life.

With the funding and implementation of this project we will have the telecommunications infrastructure in place required as a critical success factor for a much brighter future for Californians.

Given the criticality of empowering this state with ubiquitous broadband, you have my full support for this Humboldt CAN project. As a long time telecommunications strategist, economic development planner and advocate on behalf of the northern California region, the time has come for action. Fund this project!

Sincerely,



John Irwin