



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
LANSING

JOHN D. CHERRY, JR.
LT. GOVERNOR

October 14, 2009

Assistant Secretary Lawrence Strickling
Broadband Technology Opportunities Program
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
HCHB, Room 4812
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Strickling:

It is my privilege to offer the comments on the following page in support of 16 applications proposing to serve communities in Michigan as part of the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act).

The goals of the Recovery Act broadband program are closely aligned with the aggressive broadband initiative I challenged my administration to undertake five years ago as part of our effort to diversify Michigan's economy and enable our workers and businesses to more effectively compete in the global marketplace.

Michigan's plan calls for extending and upgrading high speed Internet access to unserved and underserved populations across the state; transforming Michigan's economic competitiveness by making affordable broadband accessible to any business in the state; ensuring a better, more efficient government for the 21st century; and strengthening our ability to monitor borders and critical infrastructure.

When the Recovery Act funding was announced, Michigan's broadband team quickly deployed across the state to bring together local governments, businesses, and service providers to identify the areas of greatest need. The result of these efforts, and of the unparalleled collaboration and cooperation among the entities involved, resulted in the submission of applications that address 66 percent of the unserved or underserved households and 68 percent of the unserved or underserved businesses in our state.

The broadband funding opportunities provided by the Recovery Act will enable Michigan to accelerate our plan to develop the broadband infrastructure necessary to build a network of connectivity across the state.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on these noteworthy projects.

Sincerely,

Jennifer M. Granholm
Governor

Michigan Broadband Projects

Round 1 ARRA Funding

The projects listed below are fundamentally aligned to the broadband goals and vision (as identified in attached letter) set forth by the state of Michigan and its consortium of key partners.

In considering the applications proposing to serve areas within Michigan, we considered the cost-effectiveness of each proposal, the creation and retention of jobs, provider experience and investment, and service-area coverage.

Based on these criteria, I submit the following comments for your consideration when reviewing the applications for funding noted below:

Applications for last mile coverage:

- Agri-Valley
- Air Advantage
- Alpena Public School District
- Azulstar
- Barry County Telephone Company
- Beaver Island Broadband
- Midwest Energy
- Pasty.Net

These providers would expand coverage to 338,000 households and 41,000 businesses that are in unserved and underserved areas across the state. This equates to 66 percent of total unserved households and 68 percent of unserved businesses in the state.

Applications for middle mile coverage:

- Merit
- Control Room Technologies
- Ottawa County

These three providers and their partners will ensure that middle-mile needs for the state will be covered in 87 percent of the counties. This will enhance Michigan's goal of sharing networks with other strategic institutions within communities throughout the state.

Applications for public computing centers:

- Michigan State University
- Community Outreach Services Corporation

These proposals will implement computer centers in 23 counties and 155 locations. They will also provide computer access to some of the most vulnerable populations and underserved areas of the state.

Applications for sustainable broadband adoption:

- Michigan State University
- Saginaw Valley
- Information Systems Intelligence

The proposals will provide access for 132,000 individuals and training for more 80,000 individuals. Additionally, the proposals will directly serve 26 rural and economically challenged counties in the state and provide extremely low-cost broadband to 7,278 residents within west and central Michigan.