

June 14, 2007

The Honorable Michael F. Easley
Governor of North Carolina
20301 Mail Service Center
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Dear Mr. Easley:

We urge you to oppose HB1587, which would impose burdensome, time-consuming, costly, and discriminatory referendum and substantive requirements that would make it virtually impossible for public entities to develop broadband networks.

Our company is working with community leaders in approximately 500 jurisdictions across the United States to deploy the kind of municipal broadband networks that would be blocked by that statute. Through public-private partnerships, we are deploying new networks at no cost to local governments. These networks offer the promise of increased economic development and jobs, enhanced market competition, and accelerated universal, affordable Internet access for all Americans. For example, Corpus Christi, Texas is today reading 73 gas meters a second over the city's Wi-Fi mesh network. St Cloud, Florida is attracting businesses and residents to its city outside of Orlando with a city-wide Wi-Fi network. Specifically in North Carolina, Tropos is working with a partner to provide free wireless internet service in a downtown area of Mt. Airy. In addition, Tropos was selected by the Wrightsville Beach Police Department to provide high speed wireless internet connections to their database in several points of the City.

These kinds of networks offer something even more valuable: enhanced public safety. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, we had deployed a wireless mesh network used by the New Orleans Police Department to reduce crime significantly. After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit, we came back to Louisiana to help with the recovery effort. As you know all too well, when "old" telecommunications networks were under water or in tatters on the ground, communications among first responders and local government officials were virtually impossible. Within days of Katrina coming ashore, we and our partners began deploying "new" telecommunications equipment to rebuild vital communications used by first responders, local leaders, and citizens, starting in New Orleans. In fact, within three weeks, we had deployed 22 self-healing mesh networks throughout the Gulf Region, including in Baton Rouge, Chalmette, Covington, Shreveport, Slidell, and Thibodeaux, as well as in Biloxi and Bay St. Louis.

The Wi-Fi mesh technology we deployed demonstrated yet again that it is one of the most robust communications systems available. The technology will stay up the longest when a catastrophic event occurs--whether a hurricane, a tornado, or a terrorist attack--and can be back up first to aid in

the rescue effort. In short, we demonstrated that Wi-Fi mesh and other new technologies are far superior to the old way of communicating via copper wires.

As you think about how to promote economic development and to prepare the State for future disasters, we trust you will want to encourage the roll out of new technology, which can co-exist and complement the technology offered by local telephone and cable companies. In an environment where business models, technologies and citizen requirements are changing faster than any one service provider can embrace, our legislative environment should encourage rapid deployment of a full complement of approaches to keeping our citizens well connected, well served and safe.

We therefore urge you to oppose HB1587 because it would eliminate the flexibility local government leaders have to deploy or to continue to operate municipal broadband networks for the benefit of their citizens.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,



Ron Sege
President and Chief Operating Officer