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April 13, 2009

The Honorable Anna Gomez
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Herbert C. Hoover Building (HCHB)
U.S. Department of Commerce / NTIA
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Gomez:

As the largest and oldest Hispanic organization in the United States, the League of United Latin American Citizens respectfully requests the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to quickly and efficiently distribute the more than \$7 billion set aside for broadband deployment and mapping in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

To facilitate the dispersal of funds to unserved and underserved areas, NTIA must stipulate several provisions for any state interested in broadband funding. As the government continues to inject money into the economy, NTIA must require some method of transparency and accountability for all interested parties. This will help eliminate potential waste and ensure funds are being used properly. However, when considering the provisions to attach to broadband stimulus funding, NTIA must be careful not to require overly burdensome regulatory criteria that suppresses growth and investment. The unfortunate by-product would be lower participation in broadband stimulus programs and less deployment to communities that need it most. The focus must continue to stay on broadband deployment to these communities instead of Internet regulatory policies that go well beyond the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) well-established principles and undercut the Congressional intent found in the stimulus bill.

Mapping is a key component to ensuring an effective process. This will enable proper identification of areas that do not have broadband access first and deploy to those neighborhoods that need it most. Working with knowledgeable community-based organizations (CBO) to facilitate the deployment process will be most effective as they can identify qualified providers with which to partner. These CBOs know their communities well and, together with private entities, can help provide broadband access to families left behind in this digital age.

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The Honorable Anna Gomez
April 13, 2009
Page 2

One of the main goals at LULAC is to advance the economic condition of Hispanic Americans through public-private partnerships working in conjunction with community-based organizations. We believe strongly in providing access to educational opportunities to our constituents to promote job creation and economic empowerment. With this in mind, we fully support the money for broadband expansion in communities of need and hope that Hispanics and other minorities can gain access to the life-changing opportunities that broadband provides.

As our nation continues to evolve into an e-society based on digital access and literacy, we must ensure that underserved and unserved populations are not left behind. Access to new and existing technologies is necessary to compete in the local, national and global marketplace. It not only provides efficiencies of service but, with the broadband stimulus money, will also become more affordable to communities struggling to make ends meet.

Broadband deployment and mapping will allow effective identification of areas and families that need broadband the most and provide access to information technology in an efficient and affordable manner. With a stagnant economy, Hispanic Americans and other low-income communities need educational and social opportunities to stay afloat and compete in the marketplace. The quicker NTIA can disperse broadband funding to our state and local leaders, the quicker these disadvantaged communities can gain access to tools of economic opportunity.

Sincerely,

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rosa Rosales".

Rosa Rosales
LULAC National President