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Ohio Department of Administrative Services  
Ted Strickland, *Governor*  
Hugh Quill, *Director*  
H. Samuel Orth, III, *State Chief Information Officer*

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April 13, 2009

The Honorable Gary Locke  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce  
Office of the Secretary  
US Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20230

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Secretary  
US Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

The Honorable Anna Gomez  
Acting Assistant Secretary, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information  
Office of the Assistant Secretary, National Telecommunications Information Administration  
US Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20230

Secretary Locke, Secretary Vilsack, and Assistant Secretary Gomez:

Broadband service represents a fundamental building block in the development of Ohio's future economy. Just as roads, rivers, rail and electric service were essential to the creation of a thriving national industrial economy, access to high speed networks will be critical to compete in 21<sup>st</sup> century global markets.

To ensure Ohio workers and businesses can effectively compete in world markets, access to superior, yet affordable broadband services must be available everywhere. The isolation resulting from not having access negatively impacts education, healthcare, and, most importantly, the continued development of a productive and competitive workforce. Therefore, Ohio is committed to addressing the broadband availability issues in our communities to minimize access isolation while maximizing the state's potential for economic development.

Your agencies are in a position to support Ohio's connectivity goals through the implementation of the broadband programs included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. In the attached document, recommendations are provided for implementation of the ARRA broadband provisions in response to the Request for Information. These recommendations were prepared by senior leadership of the Ohio Broadband Council, Connect Ohio and members of Governor Strickland's staff. In these recommendations, we consistently advocate for your consideration of the following provisions:

- Ohio has made a significant investment to establish our Connect Ohio program. Through those efforts, we now have up-to-date broadband availability mapping and research on broadband adoption and use available to support the prioritization of broadband funding opportunities in Ohio.
- Ohio would support an initial round of funding for broadband deployment projects that provide service to the unserved, as determined by availability maps prepared with provider-supplied data and informed by feedback from the public.
- Once applications to cost-effectively provide service in unserved areas have been considered, Ohio would then advocate for funding to projects that seek to provide advanced services and sustainable adoption programs to areas designated as underserved, where data on residential and consumer broadband usage and barriers to adoption is available.
- Ohio also advocates for the consideration of alternatives to the 20% match requirement. Consideration should be extended to prior expenditures such as for Connect Ohio, as well as for in-kind match options.

I appreciate your review of Ohio's comments and look forward to release of the rules pertinent to the broadband program. Contact information for primary representatives of our broadband efforts is provided below. Please feel free to contact these individuals with any questions related to these comments or broadband funding opportunities in Ohio.

Sincerely,



H. Samuel Orth, III  
State Chief Information Officer

#### Ohio Broadband Program Representatives

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