

PHIL BREDESEN  
THE GOVERNOR OF TENNESSEE

13 April 2009

Ms. Anna Gomez  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
National Telecommunications and Information Administration  
Herbert C. Hoover Building (HCHB)  
U.S. Department of Commerce / NTIA  
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Gomez:

Connected Tennessee has been active in the State of Tennessee since 2006 working to bring broadband availability to all Tennesseans and using innovative techniques to ensure that more and more citizens of the Volunteer State every day realize the benefits of broadband adoption.

Pursuant to P.L. 110-385, the Broadband Data Improvement Act (Section 106, subsection (i)(2)(B)), the State of Tennessee hereby designates Connected Tennessee as the single eligible entity in Tennessee to receive a grant under the State Broadband Data & Development Grant Program.

This is also to express Tennessee's strong support for full funding of the State Broadband Data and Development Grant Program, which was created in Sec. 106 of P.L. 110-385, the Broadband Data Improvement Act, and to which the NTIA can apply up to \$350 million from funding allocated in P.L. 111-5, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The State Broadband Data and Development Grant Program was based on a concept of statewide broadband initiatives that Tennessee has adopted, funded and initiated. The comprehensive approach to broadband advancement taken by Tennessee has yielded measurable and positive results for our citizens.

Since the start of our initiative, we have seen concrete and positive benefits, including home broadband adoption growth of 26% compared to an estimated 15% growth nationally. Computer ownership in Tennessee has more than doubled the national growth – increasing by 7%

compared to an estimated 3% nationally. Tennessee has now surpassed (by 10 percentage points) the national average of 74% of Americans who use the Internet from home location. In Tennessee, 84% of residents use the Internet. Underserved populations in Tennessee have seen the largest increases in broadband adoption and computer ownership, particularly among those demographics which have been targeted through the Connected Tennessee program. Broadband adoption among low-income minorities grew by 90% within the first year of Connected Tennessee's work.

Connected Tennessee's broadband initiative already has in place the activities required under the State Broadband Data and Development Grant Program to qualify for grant funds. Granular statewide broadband inventory maps, local grassroots demand creation teams, regular and local consumer research, collaboration with broadband service providers to extend broadband service to the unserved and programs to improve computer ownership are all elements of Connected Tennessee.

Furthermore, Connected Tennessee's research and mapping capabilities will be critical to Tennessee as we engage them to develop plans to promote broadband adoption and to bring new levels of service and affordability to our businesses and residences.

While Tennessee began this important work using state funds, our state needs federal help to continue and finish the work we have started. Congress unanimously passed the Broadband Data Improvement Act and created the State Broadband Data and Development Grant Program, deliberately providing \$350 million in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act so that NTIA would have full funding for this important program. It is an indispensable part of a comprehensive federal approach to broadband improvement.

It is imperative for P.L. 110-385 to be implemented as rapidly as P.L. 111-5 which will make funding available expediently to states, including the Volunteer State, through the State Broadband Data and Development Grant Program.

Please contact Mr. John Morgan, Deputy to the Governor, at 615-253-7700, with any questions.

Sincerely,



Phil Bredesen