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NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
4201 WILSON BOULEVARD
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22230

AS FACULTY SECRETARIAL



OFFICE OF THE
DIRECTOR

April 30, 2009

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The Honorable Gary Locke
Secretary
Department of Commerce
1402 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary ^{Bry} Locke:

I would like to thank you for taking the time to meet with us Friday to discuss broadband networking. We agree with you that an aggressive and innovative broadband strategy is critical for the nation, and that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) investments need to produce highly visible results that will over time stand out as having made a difference. We firmly believe that, with NSF's four-decade track record of university-based, peer-reviewed investments in networking that led to the development of the internet, the web browser, and innovative, unforeseen applications and companies, such as Google, we can assist you in making this happen.

As we discussed, if roughly 10 percent of the NTIA/RUS ARRA funding were to be invested in high-end broadband activities centered on the nation's institutions of higher education, regional and national network organizations, and their community consortia, this could lead to several hundred projects that could be rolled out very quickly, laying the foundation for next-generation innovations that continue to pull the entire broadband effort into the future. Several whitepapers have made recommendations along these lines, including those from Microsoft, the State of California Broadband Task Force, and the "Unleashing Waves" documents, all of which we left with your staff. "Unleashing Waves", authored by Ed Lazowska and others in the academic community, was endorsed by over a dozen national networking and educational organizations and companies representing all 50 states and over 2,200 colleges and universities. It was also endorsed by 30 state and regional networks connecting over 60,000 institutions including K-12 schools, libraries, hospitals, community colleges, universities, and museums.

The Honorable Gary Locke

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In order to achieve these goals, we propose a partnership be developed between the NSF and the Department of Commerce, not only for the first wave of investments through ARRA, but for future broadband developments as well. The essential components of the partnership would be:

- Creation of a peer-review process for assessing the merits of proposals to be submitted for the ARRA investment, and
- Formation of a joint advisory group to help in developing the strategy and process for the ARRA investment and beyond.

Again, I would like to stress that NSF is not requesting that any of the NTIA/RUS ARRA funds be made available for NSF use. What is being proposed is a genuine partnership to help ensure that an effective national broadband strategy is developed and that our mutual investments in this area are coordinated for maximum impact. NSF stands ready to work with your staff to begin considering the structure of the advisory group and the peer review process suggested.

NSF looks forward to working with you and members of the Department of Commerce in this important endeavor.

Best regards.

Sincerely,



Arden L. Bement, Jr.
Director

cc: T. Kalil, OSTP
E. Seidel, NSF