



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Telecommunications and
Information Administration
Washington, D.C. 20230

MAY 19 2009

The Honorable Jared Polis
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Polis:

Thank you for your letter to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) regarding the broadband initiatives in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act). As you know, Section 6001 of the Recovery Act requires NTIA, in consultation with the Federal Communications Commission, to establish the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP). The statute sets forth several priorities, including accelerating broadband deployment in both unserved and underserved areas, and ensuring that strategic institutions that are likely to create jobs or provide significant public benefits have broadband connections.

I appreciate the view expressed by you and your colleagues that NTIA should implement the BTOP in a manner that defines Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) as unserved or underserved. On March 12, 2009, NTIA released a *Request for Information* (RFI) that seeks public comment on a wide range of issues that will inform NTIA's decisionmaking as it develops its BTOP grant program. Among other things, the RFI seeks input on the appropriate definitions of "unserved" and "underserved" areas. Comments in response to the RFI were due to NTIA by April 13, 2009, and all public comments are publicly available at the BTOP website at www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandgrants.

NTIA will make broadband grant funds available through a competitive process and expects to release its initial grant guidelines this summer, after which eligible entities will be able to apply for broadband stimulus funds. NTIA also will be hosting grant workshops to encourage and facilitate entities seeking to apply for grants. NTIA is moving expeditiously to implement this program to ensure that Recovery Funds are made available as quickly as possible.

In closing, I give you my personal assurance that your thoughtful views on this matter, which will be made part of the public record, are greatly appreciated and will receive serious consideration as NTIA implements this important program. If I may be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me or Jim Wasilewski, NTIA's Director of Congressional Affairs, at (202) 482-1551.

Sincerely,

Bernadette McGuire-Rivera
Associate Administrator
Office of Telecommunications
and Information Applications

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

MAY 4 2009

April 13, 2009

Dr. Bernadette McGuire-Rivera
Associate Administrator
National Telecommunications & Information Administration
Office of Telecommunications and Information Applications
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave., NW Washington, DC 20230

ACTION OFFICE JW
COPIES TO M. Seifert
S. Morris A. Wilhelm BMR
L. Alias A. Simpson B. Brown
SUSPENSE DATE 5/13/09
REMARKS _____
CONTROL# 0405

Dear Associate Administrator McGuire-Rivera,

With passage of The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) now has the important task to determine the rules and corresponding definitions of the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program. As your agency goes through this process, we believe it is critical to ensure that our nation's citizens continue to have access to vital emergency services provided by the public safety agencies.

One of the key purposes of the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program is to improve access to, and use of, broadband service by public safety agencies. We support this effort and believe that in order to meet this worthy goal, the Agency must ensure that Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) are included in the unserved / underserved definition as eligible participants in the grant program.

According to the National Emergency Number Association (NENA), the vast majority of today's 9-1-1 networks use outdated analog technology, architectures and protocols that are holdovers from the 1960s. It is our belief that Congress' goal to modernize public safety networks cannot be met if universal broadband access and adoption does not also ensure that the nation's emergency services systems are able to provide all citizens with access to modern emergency communications functionality and services.

By any measure, the nation's emergency communications infrastructure and those who rely on it are vastly underserved and without this inclusion, not only will these agencies be unable to modernize their 9-1-1 networks, but the public will be unable to access emergency services from current technology, such as text messaging.

The kinds of advanced public safety system that would be available immediately upon

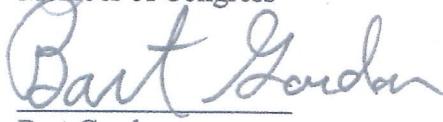
9-1-1 responding agencies in times of emergencies, but will also enable the PSAPs to communicate vital information, such as pictures, text messages and video to the first responders and other impacted agencies. This promise can be fulfilled and the public's expectations can be met with federal and state support for investment and innovation.

We recognize the tremendous task that you must undertake and strongly encourage that you include our nation's PSAPs in the definition of both unserved and underserved areas so the public safety community can begin to implement Congress's vision through the deployment of public safety broadband networks via the broadband grant program.

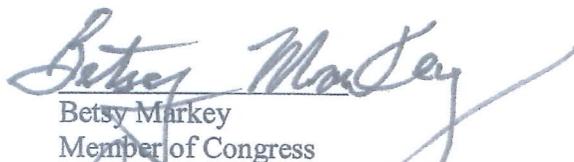
Sincerely,



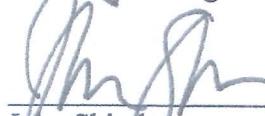
Jared Polis
Member of Congress



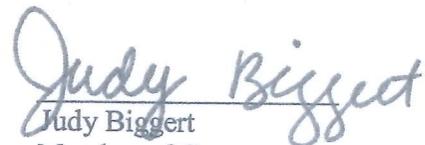
Bart Gordon
Member of Congress



Betsy Markey
Member of Congress



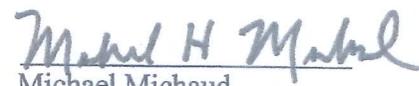
John Shimkus
Member of Congress



Judy Biggert
Member of Congress



Timothy V. Johnson
Member of Congress



Michael Michaud
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