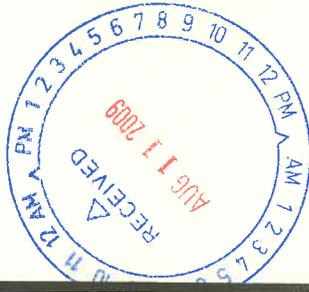




Established 1771



• **COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
George Lucier, Chair  
Sally Kost, Vice Chair  
Mike Cross  
Carl Thompson  
Tom Vanderbeck

• **COUNTY MANAGER**  
Charlie Horne

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To: David J. Villano, Rural Utilities Service  
Anthony Wilhelm, National Telecommunications and Information Administration  
From: George Lucier, Chair, Chatham County Board of Commissioners  
CC: Vivek Kundra, Federal Chief Information Officer  
Senator Bob Atwater, Representative Joe Hackney, Congressman Bob Etheridge,  
Congressman David Price, Senator Kay Hagan, Senator Richard Burr  
Jane Smith Patterson, NC Rural Internet Access Authority  
Date: August 3, 2009  
Re: Broadband Notice of Funding Availability

As a rural county in critical need of expanded broadband services, I am writing to express our disappointment that we could not possibly meet the requirements for recently announced funding offered through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. It will be almost impossible for any rural areas or small towns to have sufficient staffing or access to outside expertise to meet the requirements, even though we are the areas intended to be served by the ARRA funding.

We understand that the requirements of the RUS Broadband Initiative Program and the NTIA Broadband Technology Opportunities Program Notices of Funding Availability are based on important public comments and feedback pertaining to broadband technology. The NOFAs reflect the fact that quality research and planning is imperative to the success of broadband projects. They also demand extensive preparatory work required to ensure a successful project and the wise use of ARRA funding.

However, the resources required to meet the requirements of the grant are beyond the capacity of most rural communities, especially if the grant funding cannot be use to hire the outside expertise necessary to help us conduct quality research and planning. It appears that the public feedback sessions did not address the very limited capacity of rural communities and local governments to prepare for successful 'shovel ready' broadband projects that are highly technical and complex

For example, many small local governments with large areas of unserved or underserved residents and businesses lack the in-house expertise to define the potential range and application of technologies, design a system and project timeline, and ensure sound network management practices. Without funding assistance to fill this gap, they cannot hope to successfully compete for grant funding.

We would appreciate your consideration, in the next round of funding, of the lack of staffing and local funding necessary to prepare a workable application for broadband funding to expand broadband access in our communities.

