



Mayor of Providence

David N. Cicilline

September 8, 2009

The Honorable Gary Locke, Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Locke:

I would like to add my voice to those who have written to urge you to reconsider the criteria requiring public safety and anchor institutions to meet an Underserved or Unserved Test to be eligible for broadband funding under the Broadband Technology and Opportunities Program (BTOP) in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

Congress intended to give public safety and anchor institutions such as schools, libraries, and medical and healthcare providers the highest funding priority in the BTOP. Section 6001 of the ARRA specifically lists public safety and anchor institutions as two of the five priorities for funding. Under the ARRA, the Unserved and Underserved Test only applies to residential consumers. In addition, the Underserved Test to determine the availability of broadband by census block depends on data that the U.S. Census does not gather. Unless amended, these critical institutions, which in many cases serve our most vulnerable populations, will not meet ARRA requirements for funding under the BTOP.

Cities and their metropolitan areas are where 84 percent of our people live and more than 90 percent of future economic growth will occur. These anchor institutions, and the vulnerable populations they serve in our cities, should be able to compete for the broadband funding. Without a change, large portions of the population will be excluded from receiving the benefits of the BTOP funding.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. I am ready to provide whatever support my office can to your efforts to revise this policy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Cicilline", written over a faint circular stamp or watermark.

David N. Cicilline
Mayor

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