



ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA  
MAYOR

September 2, 2009

The Honorable Gary Locke  
Secretary of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Locke:

On behalf of myself and my constituents, I thank you for your leadership in making the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act a success. I write to suggest that with modest changes to the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program ("BTOP") administered by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration could better facilitate making available affordable broadband access to all Americans and enhance the long term recovery of our nation.

In enacting the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the President and the Congress wisely recognized that when it came to broadband "unserved" and "underserved" are not just places in America - they are the people of America. The Act provided that the BTOP program should be used: (1 & 2) to provide broadband access to unserved and underserved areas; (3) to provide broadband access and education to our community anchor institutions (such as schools, libraries, hospitals, job training centers) and vulnerable populations (such as the unemployed, low-income, aged); (4) to improve broadband access and use by our public safety agencies; and (5) to create broadband jobs. Congress understood that our community anchor institutions serve the vulnerable that live within the shadows of the affluent; acts as models of innovation in the convergence of broadband, health information, and smart grid technology; and generate new jobs building sustainable broadband projects.

Unfortunately, the BTOP eligibility rules for the first round limited funding to unserved and underserved geographic areas, and the community anchor institutions that serve those areas. As NTIA has defined unserved and underserved areas, it makes it difficult for urban areas to qualify if any broadband service is available in the area, despite research that shows the highest percentage of consumers not taking advantage of available broadband access opportunities are in urban America.

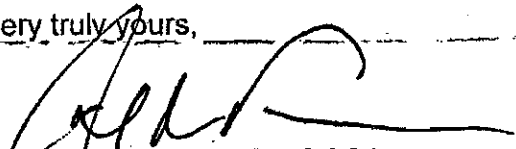


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I therefore request you and the NTIA do more to make underserved people and the community anchor institutions that service them eligible for infrastructure funding in the second and third funding rounds. Such eligibility is what President Obama and the Congress intended.

I thank you again for your leadership on this issue and look forward to continuing our partnership to get America back on the road to Recovery.

Very truly yours,



ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA  
Mayor

ARV:jbc