NORTH Dakota | Governor Doug Burgum

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September 19, 2022

Sarah Bleau
Director of Middle Mile
NTIA Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230

Subject: Letter of Support for North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure Upgrades

Dear Director Bleau,

On behalf of the State of North Dakota, we submit this letter of support for Dakota Carrier Network's (DCN) North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure project.

Broadband is now considered essential infrastructure. North Dakota is a rural state with long geographic distances between communities and population centers. Having reliable, high-speed connectivity is a necessity, especially to those in rural areas. We recognize the importance of this project to expand and upgrade the present infrastructure to support the need for increased capacity for ongoing and future technology demands in our state. The country's rapid transition to internet-based education, telehealth, remote work, electric vehicle connectivity and more, makes it imperative that North Dakota have robust connectivity.

This project will provide much-needed expansion and sustainability in the backbone infrastructure that serves North Dakota's rural communities, schools, health institutions and businesses, while reducing the costs of these upgrades to customers. DCN's commitment to investing in North Dakota's broadband infrastructure will promote economic growth, innovation and development opportunities for rural communities in North Dakota.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important project. We look forward to its swift completion.

With gratitude,

Doug Burgum
Governor

600 East Boulevard Avenue | Bismarck, ND 58505-0001 | 701.328.2200 | governor.ND.gov

NORTH Dakota | Information Technology
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September 13, 2022

Sarah Bleau
Director of Middle Mile
NTIA Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Subject: Letter of Support for North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure Upgrades

Dear Director Bleau,

On behalf of the State of North Dakota Information Technology Dept., I am writing this letter of support for the Dakota Carrier Network's (DCN) North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure project.

The State of North Dakota supports the broadband environment for the entire public sector within the State. As such we recognize just how important broadband is to our constituents whether it be supporting the entirety of efforts of state government, local government, and the educational systems. There is simply no public entity that does not rely heavily on quality broadband connectivity to fulfill its mission or goals.

Beyond the direct delivery mission of State Government broadband is considered essential infrastructure. North Dakota is a rural state that has large geographic distances that connect one another. Having reliable, high-speed connectivity is a necessity, especially to those in rural areas. We recognize the importance of this project to expand and upgrade the present infrastructure to support the need for increased capacity for ongoing and future technology demands needed in our state. The country's rapid transition to internet-based education, telehealth, remote work, electric vehicle connectivity, and more, makes it imperative that North Dakota have robust connectivity.

This project will provide the needed increase and sustainability in the critical infrastructure that serves North Dakota's rural communities, schools, health institutions, businesses, etc., while reducing the costs of these upgrades to customers. DCN's commitment to investing in North Dakota's broadband infrastructure will promote economic growth, innovation, and development opportunities for rural communities in North Dakota.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important project. We look forward to its swift completion.

Sincerely,

Duane Schell

Duane Schell
Chief Technology Officer – State of North Dakota
Head of ND Broadband Program – State of North Dakota

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 23, 2022

Ms. Sarah Bleau
Director of Middle Mile
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

RE: Dakota Carrier Network National Telecommunications and Information Administration Project Funding Request

Director Bleau:

I write in support of Dakota Carrier Network's Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program funding request to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

Dakota Carrier Network works to ensure that reliable, high-speed connectivity is available across North Dakota. This includes expanding and upgrading present infrastructure to support the increased needs for more capacity and the technology demands relating to education, telehealth, and remote work, all of which has grown immensely in recent years.

Access to broadband is critical for a largely rural state such as North Dakota. Currently, Dakota Carrier Network fiber optic middle mile infrastructure supports a wide range of North Dakota's institutions with internet and connectivity needs. These institutions include K-12 schools, higher education institutions, critical healthcare providers, as well as public safety locations, 911 dispatch centers, National Guard, and state radio towers, among others.

Thank you for your full consideration of Dakota Carrier Network's $19 million funding request.

Sincerely,

Kelly Armstrong
Member of Congress

NORTH Dakota | Commerce
Be Legendary.

September 14, 2022

Sarah Bleau
Director of Middle Mile
NTIA Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Subject: Letter of Support for North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure Upgrades

Dear Director Bleau,

North Dakota Department of Commerce is pleased to support the Dakota Carrier Network's (DCN) North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure project.

The North Dakota Department of Commerce works to improve the quality of life for North Dakota citizens by leading efforts to attract, retain and expand wealth. Commerce serves businesses and communities statewide through committed people and partners who offer valuable programs and dynamic services. Access to high-speed connectivity improves productivity and profitability of all business and allows them to compete.

Broadband is now considered essential infrastructure. North Dakota is a rural state that has large geographic distances that connect one another. Having reliable, high-speed connectivity is a necessity, especially to those in rural areas. We recognize the importance of this project to expand and upgrade the present infrastructure to support the need for increased capacity for ongoing and future technology demands needed in our state. The country's rapid transition to internet-based education, telehealth, remote work, electric vehicle connectivity, and more, makes it imperative that North Dakota have robust connectivity.

This project will provide the needed increase and sustainability in the backbone infrastructure that serves North Dakota's rural communities, schools, health institutions, and businesses, while reducing the costs of these upgrades to customers. DCN's commitment to investing in North Dakota's broadband infrastructure will promote economic growth, innovation, and development opportunities for rural communities in North Dakota.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important project. We look forward to its swift completion.

Sincerely,

Joshua Teigen
Commissioner
ND Department of Commerce

1600 E Century Avenue, Suite 6 | P.O. Box 2057 | Bismarck, ND 58502
PHONE: 701-328-5300 | TOLL FREE: 1-866-4DAKOTA | ND RELAY TTY: 1-800-366-6888 | VOICE: 1-800-366-6889 |
NDCommerce.com

Kirsten Baesler
State Superintendent

Dr. Donna Fishbeck
Chief of Staff

Laurie Matzke
Assistant Superintendent

NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

600 E Boulevard Ave., Dept. 201
Bismarck, ND 58505-0440
Phone (701) 328-2260
Fax (701) 328-2461
http://www.nd.gov/dpi

Sept. 21, 2022

Sarah Bleau
Director of Middle Mile
NTIA Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Subject: Letter of Support for North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure Upgrades

Dear Director Bleau,

On behalf of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, I am writing to support the Dakota Carrier Network's (DCN) North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure project.

The Department of Public Instruction oversees the education of more than 120,000 public and nonpublic North Dakota students in grades kindergarten through 12. Fast and reliable broadband connections are essential to providing education in our state, particularly to schools in remote rural areas.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began in the spring of 2020, our North Dakota schools were closed for in-person instruction for roughly the last three months of the 2019-20 school year. We switched as quickly as possible to virtual learning – i.e., online instruction – to avoid having our students lose months of classroom time to the pandemic.

I am indescribably proud of how our schools responded to this change. But I am mindful it could not have happened without the statewide network that our visionary broadband providers, especially the Dakota Carrier Network, had put in place. Almost 100 percent of our students had access to high-speed broadband, and local providers worked to close that gap completely, at no cost, during the remainder of the school year.

Our Legislature subsequently approved allowing our schools to offer "virtual academy" instructional options to their students and families, as well as distance learning during times when a school building may be temporarily inaccessible – when a blizzard strikes, when the school's heating system breaks down, or when there is a disaster emergency in the area.

(Continued)

Kirsten Baesler
State Superintendent

Dr. Donna Fishbeck
Chief of Staff

Laurie Matzke
Assistant Superintendent

NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

600 E Boulevard Ave., Dept. 201
Bismarck, ND 58505-0440
Phone (701) 328-2260
Fax (701) 328-2461
http://www.nd.gov/dpi

We recognize the importance of this project to expand and upgrade our present infrastructure to support the need for increased capacity for our state's ongoing and future technology demands. The country's rapid transition to internet-based education, telehealth, remote work, electric vehicle connectivity, and more, makes it imperative that North Dakota have robust connectivity.

This project will provide the needed increase and sustainability in the backbone infrastructure that serves North Dakota's rural communities, schools, health institutions, and businesses, while reducing the costs of these upgrades to customers. DCN's commitment to investing in North Dakota's broadband infrastructure will promote economic growth, innovation, and development opportunities for rural communities in North Dakota.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important project. We look forward to its swift completion.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Baesler

Kirsten Baesler, Superintendent
North Dakota Department of Public Instruction

NORTH Dakota | Emergency Services
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September 13, 2022

Sarah Bleau
Director of Middle Mile
NTIA Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Subject: Letter of Support for North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure Upgrades

Dear Director Bleau,

On behalf of the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services, Homeland Security Division**,** I am writing this letter of support for the Dakota Carrier Network's (DCN) North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure project.

The Homeland Security Division relies heavily on DCN's fiber backbone when responding to both natural and man-made disasters across the State of North Dakota. Not only does the division rely on the service, a significant portion of local community responders, as well as private citizens, rely on the DCN to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters. As our agency continues to harness innovation with autonomous systems and "big data" to increase public safety across the state, reliable connectivity and a robust fiber backbone becomes even more important. Simply put, having a network capable of providing fast, reliable service empowers our agency to better serve the citizens of North Dakota and will save lives, livelihoods and response costs.

Broadband is now considered essential infrastructure. North Dakota is a rural state spanning large geographical distances. Having reliable, high-speed connectivity is a necessity, especially to those in remote portion of the state. We recognize the importance of this project to expand and upgrade the present infrastructure to support increased capacity for ongoing and future technology demands needed in our state. The country's rapid transition to internet-based education, telehealth, remote work, electric vehicle connectivity, and more, makes it imperative that North Dakota have robust connectivity.

This project will augment and sustain backbone infrastructure to serve North Dakota's rural communities, schools, health institutions, and businesses, while reducing the costs of these upgrades to customers. DCN's commitment to investing in North Dakota's broadband infrastructure will promote economic growth, innovation and development opportunities for rural communities in North Dakota.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important project. We look forward to its swift completion.

Sincerely,

Darin Hanson, Director
Homeland Security Division
North Dakota Department of Emergency Services

NORTH DAKOTA
UNIVERSITY SYSTEM
ACCESS. INNOVATION. EXCELLENCE.

State Capitol – 600 E Boulevard Ave – Dept. 215
Bismarck ND 58505-0230
Phone: 701.328.2960 Fax: 701.328.2961
E-mail: ndus.inquiry@ndus.edu Web: ndus.edu

September 16, 2022

Sarah Bleau
Director of Middle Mile
NTIA Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Subject: Letter of Support for North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure Upgrades

Dear Director Bleau,

On behalf of the North Dakota University System, I am writing this letter of support for the Dakota Carrier Network's (DCN) North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure project.

The North Dakota University System and Core Technology services work directly with the state's 11 public higher education institutions to provide technological services and broadband systems to the state's 45,000 students, in addition to the faculty and staff that serve our great state.

Broadband is now considered essential infrastructure. North Dakota is a rural state that has large geographic distances that connect one another. Having reliable, high-speed connectivity is a necessity, especially to those in rural areas. We recognize the importance of this project to expand and upgrade the present infrastructure to support the need for increased capacity for ongoing and future technology demands needed in our state. The country's rapid transition to internet-based education, telehealth, remote work, electric vehicle connectivity, and more, makes it imperative that North Dakota have robust connectivity.

This project will provide the needed increase and sustainability in the backbone infrastructure that serves North Dakota's rural communities, schools, health institutions, and businesses, while reducing the costs of these upgrades to customers. DCN's commitment to investing in North Dakota's broadband infrastructure will promote economic growth, innovation, and development opportunities for rural communities in North Dakota.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important project. We look forward to its swift completion.

Sincerely,

Mark Hagerott, PhD
Chancellor, North Dakota University System

NORTH Dakota | Health & Human Services
Be Legendary.

September 23, 2022

Sarah Bleau
Director of Middle Mile
NTIA Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Subject: Letter of Support for North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure Upgrades

Dear Director Bleau,

I am writing this letter of support for the Dakota Carrier Network's (DCN) North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure project. I am the Director for the Health Response and Licensure Section of the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services. Our section has a significant role in the establishment and continued utilization of public health and medical connections through internet services to public health and medical entities. We have been engaged in establishing these networks for more than 20 years. During that time, we assisted in the planning and funding of statewide hospital and public health video conference systems, the provision of email and other internet services. These systems were initially built through low band technologies, then transitioned to broadband. We thoroughly understand the importance that broadband plays for public health and medical systems. They rely heavily on broadband for safe and effective delivery of day-to-day services as well as emergency and disaster response.

Throughout this time, DCN has been a committed, reliable and innovative partner. We hope their application will be favorably considered. I am confident, if funded, their participation will result in meaningful improvement to the broadband backbone infrastructure which is foundational for the delivery of public health and medical services.

Please let me know if you require any additional information or have any questions. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this letter of support.

Sincerely,

Tim Wiedrich

Tim Wiedrich, Director
Health Response and Licensure Section

NDACo
NORTH DAKOTA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
for the good of all counties!

September 20, 2022

Sarah Bleau
Director of Middle Mile
NTIA Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Subject: Letter of Support for North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure Upgrades

Dear Director Bleau,

On behalf of the **North Dakota Association of Counties (NDACo), which represents all 53 of North Dakota's counties,** I am writing this letter of support for the Dakota Carrier Network's (DCN) North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure project.

NDACo has been representing the needs of county government since its creation in 1973. Highly available and scalable network service is critical for effective county government and has become increasingly important for public safety communications in recent years. We know that our counties will continue to place increased demands on DCN's networks in the future and we support DCN's planned improvements to prepare for that future.

Broadband is essential infrastructure. North Dakota is a rural state that has large geographic distances that connect one another. Having reliable, high-speed connectivity is a necessity, especially to those in rural areas. We recognize the importance of this project to expand and upgrade the present infrastructure to support the need for increased capacity for ongoing and future technology demands needed in our state. The country's rapid transition to internet-based education, telehealth, remote work, electric vehicle connectivity, and more, makes it imperative that North Dakota have robust connectivity.

This project will provide the needed increase and sustainability in the backbone infrastructure that serves North Dakota's rural communities, schools, health institutions, and businesses, while reducing the costs of these upgrades to customers. DCN's commitment to investing in North Dakota's broadband infrastructure will promote economic growth, innovation, and development opportunities for rural communities in North Dakota.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request. NDACo stands ready, wiling and able to assist anyway we can to carry out this valuable project.

Sincerely,

Aaron Birst, Executive Director
NDACo

P.O. Box 877 | Bismarck, ND 58502-0877
701.328.7300 | 1.800.932.8730 | Fax: 701.328.7308
www.ndaco.org

North Dakota Hospital Association
Est. 1934

Vision
The North Dakota Hospital Association will take an active leadership role in major Healthcare issues.

Mission
The North Dakota Hospital Association exists to advance the health status of persons served by the membership.

September 20, 2022

Sarah Bleau
Director of Middle Mile
NTIA Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Subject: Letter of Support for North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure Upgrades

Dear Director Bleau,

On behalf of the North Dakota Hospital Association (NDHA), I am writing this letter of support for the Dakota Carrier Network's (DCN) North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure Upgrade Project.

NDHA is a non-profit organization comprised of 46 member hospitals with a common interest in promoting the health of North Dakota citizens. As hospitals provide care to their patients, they need access to high-speed connectivity. This project will help assist hospitals as they meet the demand for telehealth services within their communities.

Broadband is now considered essential infrastructure. North Dakota is a rural state that has large geographic distances that connect one another. Having reliable, high-speed connectivity is a necessity, especially for those in rural areas. We recognize the importance of this project to expand and upgrade the present infrastructure to support the need for increased capacity for ongoing and future technology demands needed in our state. The country's rapid transition to internet-based education, telehealth, remote work, electric vehicle connectivity, and more, makes it imperative that North Dakota have robust connectivity.

This project will provide the needed increase and sustainability in the backbone infrastructure that serves North Dakota's rural communities, schools, health institutions, and businesses, while reducing the costs of these upgrades to customers. DCN's commitment to investing in North Dakota's broadband infrastructure will promote economic growth, innovation, and development opportunities for rural communities in North Dakota.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important project. We look forward to its swift completion.

Sincerely,

Tim Blasl
President

PO Box 7340 Bismarck, ND 58507-7340 Phone 701 224-9732 Fax 701 224-9529

September 23, 2022

Sarah Bleau
Director of Middle Mile
NTIA Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Subject: Letter of Support for North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure Upgrades

Dear Director Bleau,

On behalf of North Dakota Health Information Network**,** I am writing this letter of support for the Dakota Carrier Network's (DCN) North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure project.

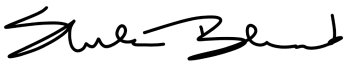
The North Dakota Health Information Network is a statewide interoperable health information exchange connecting diverse providers, hospitals, clinics, and labs to make electronic health information available on demand at the point of care. It's mission is to advance the adoption and use of technology to exchange health information and improve healthcare quality, patient safety, and the overall efficiency of healthcare and public health services in North Dakota. The advancement of high-speed connectivity across the state is critical to the success of this work. The health information exchange relies on this to share critical information between providers in a timely manner.

Broadband is now considered essential infrastructure. North Dakota is a rural state that has large geographic distances that connect one another. Having reliable, high-speed connectivity is a necessity, especially to those in rural areas. We recognize the importance of this project to expand and upgrade the present infrastructure to support the need for increased capacity for ongoing and future technology demands needed in our state. The country's rapid transition to internet-based education, healthcare, telehealth, remote work, electric vehicle connectivity, and more, makes it imperative that North Dakota have robust connectivity.

This project will provide the needed increase and sustainability in the backbone infrastructure that serves North Dakota's rural communities, schools, health institutions, and businesses, while reducing the costs of these upgrades to customers. DCN's commitment to investing in North Dakota's broadband infrastructure will promote economic growth, innovation, and development opportunities for rural communities in North Dakota.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important project.

Sincerely,



Shila Blend, PhD, RN-BC
Health Information Technology Director
North Dakota Health Information Network

Sanford Medical Center
300 North Seventh St.
Bismarck, ND 58501

Ph: (701) 323-6000
sanfordhealth.org

Office of the President

SANFORD HEALTH

September 22, 2022

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in support of Dakota Carrier Network's (DCN) grant application to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to support resiliency, bandwidth upgrades and expansion of middle mile infrastructure throughout North Dakota. The grant will help DCN improve connectivity and broadband access to anchor institutions, such as K-12 schools, institutions of higher learning, health care providers and public safety locations.

Over the last several years, virtual care delivery has grown to become a significant tool to providing high-quality health care, a trend that escalated during the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual connectivity creates additional access for patients to primary and specialty care, especially in rural areas, which make up a significant portion of North Dakota. At Sanford Health, we provide 24/7 e-visits and virtual visits, allowing patients to stay at home for initial diagnoses of acute issues. Additionally, we have equipped specialists with the ability to provide virtual consults or follow-up visits with patients in primary care locations in rural health care sites across North Dakota, while also providing immediate assistance to frontline providers at those health centers in urgent situations when minutes matter. Continued advancement in virtual care delivery is not possible without reliable, consistent broadband access.

On a broader level, lack of broadband Internet access (BIA) is detrimental to overall health. According to an August 2020 article in the American Journal of Public Health: "The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates the lack of BIA influences each of the six social determinants of health domains defined by the American Medical Association." These areas are socioeconomic status; education; neighborhood and physical environment; employment; social support networks; and access to health care.

We are encouraged by the work DCN has done to increase broadband access throughout North Dakota, and we are confident the grant funds will help DCN ensure the broadband networks will remain intact and reliable.

Sincerely,

Todd Schaffer, MD
President/CEO
Sanford Health – Bismarck region

Our Mission:
Dedicated to the work of health and healing

GRANDFARM

September 20, 2022

Sarah Bleau
Director of Middle Mile
NTIA Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Subject: Letter of Support for North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure Upgrades

Dear Director Bleau,

On behalf of Grand Farm Research and Education Initiative (Grand Farm), I am writing this letter of support for the Dakota Carrier Network's (DCN) North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure Upgrade Project.

Grand Farm enables technology to feed the world. Grand Farm mobilizes an ecosystem of growers, higher education, and industry around key challenges to rapidly advance technology and agriculture. A core challenge of agriculture is in middle mile, last mile, and last acre solutions deployment of connectivity. This project will accelerate the opportunity for advanced technology to be deployed in agriculture settings.

Broadband is now considered essential infrastructure. North Dakota is a rural state that has large geographic distances that connect one another. Having reliable, high-speed connectivity is a necessity, especially for those in rural areas. We recognize the importance of this project to expand and upgrade the present infrastructure to support the need for increased capacity for ongoing and future technology demands needed in our state. The country's rapid transition to internet-based education, telehealth, remote work, electric vehicle connectivity, and more, makes it imperative that North Dakota have robust connectivity.

This project will provide the needed increase and sustainability in the backbone infrastructure that serves North Dakota's rural communities, schools, health institutions, and businesses, while reducing the costs of these upgrades to customers. DCN's commitment to investing in North Dakota's broadband infrastructure will promote economic growth, innovation, and development opportunities for rural communities in North Dakota.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important project. We look forward to its swift completion.

Sincerely,

Dr. William Aderholdt
Director, Program Management Office
Grand Farm Research and Education Initiative

Consolidated
Reach the World, from here.

507 South Main
P.O. Box 1408
Dickinson, ND 58601

701-483-4000
1-888-225-5282

September 20, 2022

Sarah Bleau
Director of Middle Mile
NTIA Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Subject: Letter of Support for North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure Upgrades

Dear Director Bleau,

On behalf of Consolidated Telcom, I am writing this letter of support for the Dakota Carrier Network's (DCN) North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure project.

Consolidated provides voice, video and broadband to southwest North Dakota. We have over 16,500 broadband customers in our service area and utilize DCN for our Internet backbone to reach the world. Broadband is also vital to our internal operations and DCN plays a critical role in making sure we have the connectivity that we need. This project will ensure that DCN has the infrastructure it needs to take our company and our customers into the future.

Broadband is now considered essential infrastructure. North Dakota is a rural state that has large geographic distances that connect one another. Having reliable, high-speed connectivity is a necessity, especially to those in rural areas. We recognize the importance of this project to expand and upgrade the present infrastructure to support the need for increased capacity for ongoing and future technology demands needed in our state. The country's rapid transition to internet-based education, telehealth, remote work, electric vehicle connectivity, and more, makes it imperative that North Dakota have robust connectivity.

This project will provide the needed increase and sustainability in the backbone infrastructure that serves North Dakota's rural communities, schools, health institutions, and businesses, while reducing the costs of these upgrades to customers. DCN's commitment to investing in North Dakota's broadband infrastructure will promote economic growth, innovation, and development opportunities for rural communities in North Dakota.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important project. We look forward to its swift completion.

Sincerely,

Bryan W. Personne
Chief Executive Office & General Manager
Consolidated Telcom

DAKOTA
CENTRAL

September 21, 2022

NTIA
Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program
US Department of Commerce, Room 4812
1401 Constitution Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20230

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of Dakota Central Telecommunications Cooperative's Board of Directors, we fully support Dakota Carrier Network's (DCN) application to NTIA for a Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Grant.

The grant would allow DCN and the sub-recipients to increase the reliability and resiliency of the current transport network that serve existing last mile customers as well as new unserved and underserved locations in North Dakota. Not only is the DCN transport network the primary carrier for the State of North Dakota and its educational institutions, but it also provides the backbone infrastructure for the governmental agencies, anchor institutions and cellular service providers throughout the entire state.

It is necessary to upgrade the transport network to keep pace with the ever-increasing consumption of bandwidth. As a result of the NTIA grant assisting in the support of the capital costs to upgrade the transport network, it will allow DCN and the sub-recipients to offer access to the network at the lowest possible price.

On behalf of Dakota Central Telecommunications, I strongly encourage NTIA to consider DCN's application for a Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Grant. Dakota Central, along with DCN, is committed to serving all end users in North Dakota. A NTIA grant award would ensure DCN and the sub-recipients will be able to provide a robust, resilient, and self-healing ring infrastructure transport network well into the future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Keith A. Larson
CEO

604 18th Street SW | Jamestown, ND 58401 | 952.1000
630 5th Street N | Carrington, ND 58421 | 652.3184
dakotacentral.com

September 21, 2022

Sarah Bleau
Director of Middle Mile
NTIA Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Subject: Letter of Support for DCN Middle Mile Infrastructure Upgrades

Dear Director Bleau,

On behalf of the board of directors of Griggs County Telephone Co and MLGC, LLC (MLGC), serving rural Eastern North Dakota, I hereby certify our full support and cooperation for Dakota Carrier Network's (DCN) application to NTIA for a Middle Mile grant.

In conjunction with our partnership with DCN, this grant will help expand broadband services to Healthcare, Long-Term Care, Public Safety, Educational, Governmental, Commercial, and Residential facilities throughout our service area in rural North Dakota.

Currently, MLGC offers broadband speeds of 1Gb to most facilities and residents. Due to the increasing demand for broadband and the geographical structure of rural North Dakota, the ability of our networks to handle this traffic is becoming technically and cost prohibitive. In the mid-2000's most of these networks were designed around a maximum throughput of 10Gb. In our most recent report done last Thursday, usage has pushed our need to just under 9Gb, leaving little room for growth.

Given that broadband is now considered an essential infrastructure, the ability for our middle mile networks to grow beyond today's usage is critical. Having reliable, high-speed connectivity is a necessity, especially for those in rural areas. We recognize the importance of this project to support the need in all aspects of our life, from internet-based education, telehealth, remote work, precision ag, electrical vehicle connectivity, and more, making it imperative to have robust connectivity and the foundation of this is the middle mile infrastructure.

This project will provide the needed infrastructure that serves North Dakota's rural communities, schools, health institutions, and businesses while reducing the costs of these upgrades to customers. MLGC and DCN's commitment to investing in North Dakota's Broadband infrastructure will promote economic growth, innovation, and development opportunities throughout the United States.

Thank you for your time, attention, and consideration of this critical project. We look forward to its swift completion.

Sincerely,

Tyler H. Kilde
MLGC
President/GM
Direct: 701-718-3333
tyler.kilde@mlgc.net

September 14, 2022

NTIA
Middle Mile Grant Program
U.S. Department of Commerce, Room 4812
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of Northwest Communications Cooperative (NCC) of Ray, ND, we submit our full support for Dakota Carrier Network's (DCN) application to NTIA for a North Dakota Middle Mile Grant.

DCN's middle mile project will strengthen resiliency, provide increased bandwidth capacity, sustain affordability, and provide additional redundancy throughout the entire state of North Dakota. This project will support a majority of North Dakota's anchor institutions including K12 schools, higher education facilities, critical healthcare providers, public safety entities, National Guard, and state radio towers along with numerous financial institutions, small businesses, and state and federal systems.

NCC is a broadband service provider located in Northwest North Dakota serving approximately 5000 broadband subscribers across 3700 square miles; including county seats, critical care healthcare facilities, K12 schools, and FirstNet tower sites. The commitments set forth by DCN's application along with NCC's last mile infrastructure will ensure future proof networks that meet the ever growing internet and connectivity needs of rural North Dakota.

On behalf of NCC, I strongly urge NTIA to consider and accept DCN's application. DCN, along with NCC, is committed to providing rural North Dakota the same broadband services you would expect to find in large metropolitan areas. This grant will help make those expectations a reality and also promote growth, jobs, and opportunity in rural North Dakota.

Sincerely,

Jeremy A. Becker

Jeremy A. Becker
CEO/GM
NCC

701.568.3331 | Fax: 701.568.7777 | ncc@nccray.com
111 Railroad Avenue, PO Box 38, Ray, ND 58849

NCC is an equal opportunity provider and employer

gondtc.com | 701.662.1100 | 1.800.880.4213 | Fax 701.662.6444
PO Box 180 | 211 22nd St NW | Devils Lake, ND 58301-0180

September 13, 2022

NTIA
Middle Mile Grant Program
1401 Constitution Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20230

To Whom is May Concern:

NDTC is submitting this letter in support of Dakota Carrier Network's (DCN) application to NTIA for the Middle Mile Grant Program. In the Notice of Funding Opportunity, NTIA identifies two key objectives of the program. They are to encourage the expansion and the extension of middle mile infrastructure, to reduce the cost of connecting unserved and underserved areas to the backbone of the internet, and to promote broadband connection resiliency through the creation of alternative connection paths that can be designed to prevent single points of failure of the broadband network. NDTC believes DCN's project will address both of these objectives.

Today DCN is the primary backbone provider delivering broadband and connectivity in North Dakota. DCN's diverse customer base includes cellular companies, businesses, banks, hospitals, schools, government entities and DCN's thirteen owner companies who are all broadband providers in North Dakota. The application submitted by DCN will provide alternate paths that will enhance the redundancy of the existing network while passing through unserved/underserved areas of North Dakota.

NDTC strongly recommends that NTIA consider DCN's application for the Middle Mile Program. DCN is committed to enhancing broadband to the citizens of North Dakota. This project will bring us one step closer to providing broadband to every location in North Dakota.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions at 701-662-1100.

Sincerely

Rodney Hoffmeyer

Rodney Hoffmeyer, CEO

NDTC

POLAR
PO Box 270 | 110 4th Street East
Park River, ND 58270 | 701.284.7221

September 20, 2022

Sarah Bleau
Director of Middle Mile
NTIA Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Subject: Letter of Support for North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure Upgrades

Dear Director Bleau,

On behalf of Polar Communications, I am writing this letter of support for the Dakota Carrier Network's (DCN) North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure project.

Polar Communications serves over 4,000 square miles in Eastern North Dakota, from the Canadian border to south of Fargo. Polar Communications is 100% fiber-to-the-home and connects to DCN's middle mile network to connect our customers to the rest of the world.

Broadband is now considered essential infrastructure. North Dakota is a rural state that has large geographic distances that connect one another. Having reliable, high-speed connectivity is a necessity, especially to those in rural areas. We recognize the importance of this project to expand and upgrade the present infrastructure to support the need for increased capacity for ongoing and future technology demands needed in our state. The country's rapid transition to internet-based education, telehealth, remote work, electric vehicle connectivity, and more, makes it imperative that North Dakota have robust connectivity.

This project will provide the needed increase and sustainability in the backbone infrastructure that serves North Dakota's rural communities, schools, health institutions, and businesses, while reducing the costs of these upgrades to customers. DCN's commitment to investing in North Dakota's broadband infrastructure will promote economic growth, innovation, and development opportunities for rural communities in North Dakota.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important project. We look forward to its swift completion.

Sincerely,

Karl Blake, CEO
Polar Communications

September 21, 2022

National Telecommunications and Information Administration
1404 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20230

Re: Dakota Carrier Network (DCN) Middle-Mile Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program Letter of Support

Dear NTIA Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Grant Committee:

On behalf of Red River Communications, please accept this letter of support for Dakota Carrier Network's (DCN) application to the NTIA Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Grant program.

While much of the national conversation around broadband access has focused on last-mile connectivity, we know robust middle-mile infrastructure is paramount to connecting underserved and unserved rural communities. That is why we are pleased to support DCN's efforts to expand and enhance existing middle-mile infrastructure.

Last-mile connectivity depends on solid middle-mile infrastructure to connect our local communities to the outside world. By accessing this network, Red River Communications can reduce capital expenditures and pass the savings onto our customers. This network also provides network resiliency, as alternative paths can prevent points of failure, allowing service providers to divert traffic in case of an outage.

As a rural telecommunications cooperative, we are working on expanding our network to help close the rural digital divide. As we complete our expansion projects within Richland County, ND, we understand that even if we use pristine fiber for our last-mile infrastructure, connecting that fiber to underfunded middle-mile infrastructure will create pocket loss and latency. Our last-mile connectivity is only as good as the middle connectivity that makes it possible.

The expansion of DCN's middle-mile network will not only reduce the costs of providing internet connectivity to the unserved and underserved, but it will also ensure increased reliability and resiliency to meet many of the critical needs in our rural state. Rural communities in North Dakota still lack reliable, affordable high-speed internet access. This grant program will help expand local broadband access those who need it most.

Red River Communications understands the demand for middle-mile grant funds is high throughout our nation. Still, we highly encourage the selection committee to consider Dakota Carrier Network's grant application strongly. Rural North Dakota depends on the continued efforts of DCN to bring more broadband to more rural communities – reliably.

Sincerely,

Tom Steinolfson
CEO/GM, Red River Communications

RTC NETWORKS

September 8, 2022

Sarah Bleau
Director of Middle Mile
NTIA Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth
1401 S Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Subject: Letter of Support for North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure Upgrades

Dear Director Bleau,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Reservation Telephone Cooperative (RTC) of Parshall, ND we commit our full support and cooperation for Dakota Carrier Network's (DCN) North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure Upgrade Project.

RTC serves a very rural part of Western North Dakota and provides high speed internet services over fiber to our 13,500+ customers. We do this over 7,500 miles of fiber covering over 9,000 square miles. We provide the fiber network for all major cell carriers in the area, bringing great cell coverage to our area providing important safety and communications as a majority of our population works in the field. We serve well over 100 anchor institutions including MHA Nation's Tribal Government, Education, Emergency Services, Green House Project and many others. The ever-growing demand for more Bandwidth and our very rural area make it imperative we can keep up with those demands. The North Dakota Middle Mile Infrastructure Upgrades will ensure that we can keep our network to the level our customers require with bandwidth, redundancy, cybersecurity and keeping our network reliable and safe.

Broadband is now considered essential infrastructure. North Dakota is a rural state that has large geographic distances that connect one another. Having reliable, high-speed connectivity is a necessity, especially for those in rural areas. We recognize the importance of this project to expand and upgrade the present infrastructure to support the need for increased capacity for ongoing and future technology demands needed in our state. The country's rapid transition to internet-based education, telehealth, remote work, electric vehicle connectivity, and more, makes it imperative that North Dakota have robust connectivity.

This project will provide the needed increase and sustainability in the backbone infrastructure that serves North Dakota's rural communities, schools, health institutions, and businesses, while reducing the costs of these upgrades to customers. DCN's commitment to investing in North Dakota's broadband infrastructure will promote economic growth, innovation, and development opportunities for rural communities in North Dakota.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important project. We look forward to its swift completion.

Sincerely,

Shane D. Hart
CEO/GM
Reservation Telephone Cooperative

friendly • knowledgeable • helpful
24 Main Street North, PO Box 68, Parshall, ND 58770
Phone: 701.862.3115 Website: www.RTC.coop

September 12, 2022

Sarah Bleau
Director of Middle Mile
NTIA Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is written in support of Dakota Carrier Network's (DCN) application to NTIA middle mile grant funds. United Communications (United) has been a partner of DCN since its inception in 1996. United and its subsidiary Turtle Mountain Communications operate a 100% fiber optic network to provide broadband services to 100% of its customers in Pembina, Cavalier, Towner, Rolette, McHenry and Bottineau counties in north central and northeast North Dakota. United utilizes DCN's middle mile network to connect its residential and business customers as well as anchor institutions such as schools, health care providers, public safety answering points, wireless towers, and various government (local, state, federal, and tribal) facilities to the rest of the world.

DCN's middle mile network is not only critical to United and its customers but customers across the majority of North Dakota. Grant dollars will ensure that costs incurred to upgrade and expand the middle mile network will not be passed down to the current and future customers.

United is committed to its partnership with DCN and to DCN's effort to provide affordable, reliable, and resilient middle mile services across the state of North Dakota. I strongly urge NTIA to consider and accept DCN's application for middle mile funds.

Sincerely,

Steve Swanson
General Manager/CEO
United Communications

WRT | PO Box 467 |101 Main St W | Hazen ND 58545

September 9, 2022

NTIA
Broadband Technology Opportunities Program
U.S. Department of Commerce, Room 4812
1401 Constitution Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20230

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter on behalf of WRT, to support Dakota Carrier Network's (DCN) application to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) for approximately $19 million in grant funding to support resiliency, bandwidth upgrades, and expansion of middle mile infrastructure throughout North Dakota.

WRT is a local cooperative providing broadband and voice service to 25 communities across central North Dakota and a portion of South Dakota, totaling over 8,300 square miles. This rural service area includes three tribal reservations combining for over 2,000 square miles, as well as four hospitals, and numerous schools ranging from preschool to tribal community college.

Our commitment to providing reliable and affordable services to our members across the state, aligns with the proposed network infrastructure improvements submitted by DCN. We fully support DCN's request for grant funding to ensure connectivity to critical and anchor institutions such as schools, rural healthcare, government facilities, and public safety providers.

It is imperative between our remote rural locations and harsh winter weather conditions, that we can rely heavily upon up-to-date technology and resilient infrastructure. It is our belief that with the financial assistance provided by the NTIA grant funding, it would help ensure the completion of this extensive project and provide dependable broadband connectivity for current and future customers.

We appreciate your consideration for WRT, DCN, and NTIA to work together to make this critical network improvement successful.

Sincerely,

Troy Schilling, CEO/GM
West River Telecommunication Cooperative