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Sent: 9/9/2024, 11:18 AM
To: bead@ntia.gov
Cc: michael.a.robinson@jsums.edu
Subject: Choosing Alternative Broadband Technologies for BEAD Program

September 9, 2024

To: NTIA

*Subject: **Choosing Alternative Broadband Technologies for BEAD Program *

Dear NTIA,

I am writing to advocate for the inclusion of private LTE/5G networks utilizing Citizens Broadband Radio Service (CBRS) as an alternative broadband technology for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program, particularly in Mississippi. This technology offers a cost-effective solution for providing mobile and fixed wireless internet access to underserved communities in both rural and urban areas.

CBRS LTE/5G networks provide carrier-grade speed, security, capacity, and reliability at a substantially lower cost than traditional broadband infrastructure. These networks can deliver speeds that meet or exceed the requirements set forth in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, ensuring 100/20 Mbps speeds with latency under 100 milliseconds. This makes it an ideal solution for areas that currently lack affordable, high-speed internet access.

As a community anchor institution, Jackson State University (JSU) is deeply invested in finding innovative solutions to bridge the digital divide in our surrounding communities. The urban areas of Jackson, as well as surrounding rural communities, have been disproportionately affected by a lack of affordable, reliable internet access. Many households in these areas, particularly in low-income, predominantly Black neighborhoods, either do not have access to high-speed internet or cannot afford the monthly service fees, even when it is available. This digital exclusion hampers educational opportunities, healthcare access, and economic growth in these communities.

We believe that private LTE/5G networks utilizing CBRS are a viable solution to this problem. With NTIA funding, JSU is committed to deploying this technology to provide free internet access to our students, faculty,

staff, and the broader community. Our vision is to create a network that empowers underserved populations and addresses the long-standing digital divide that continues to hold back economic and social progress.

It has been over 28 years since the term "digital divide" was first coined, yet the gap persists. We can no longer afford to wait. I urge the NTIA to approve the use of CBRS LTE/5G networks and other innovative technologies as part of the BEAD Program, ensuring equitable access to high-speed internet for underserved Black urban and rural communities.

Thank you for considering this critical request. We look forward to your support in empowering our communities with the digital tools they need to thrive.

Sincerely,

Michael Robinson

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