



California State Senate

ABEL MALDONADO
FIFTEENTH SENATE DISTRICT

March 24, 2010

Lawrence Strickling, Assistant Secretary
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Strickling:

I am writing in support of the grant application by the City of Watsonville, Corporation for Network Initiatives in California (CENIC), and Cruzio ISP of Santa Cruz County on behalf of the Central Coast Broadband Consortium (CCBC) to the National Telecommunications Information Administration's Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) concerning a fiber optic middle mile network along the Central Coast.

This project is the result of collaborative efforts initiated by the CCBC which is comprised of governmental entities, educational institutions, health and public safety agencies and private enterprise from the tri-county region (Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz). Indicative of such a broad coalition, the benefits to the region that would be garnered from this project would be substantial.

The majority of the 15th District is rural in nature and this project is vital to establishing broadband connectivity to many of the un-served and underserved communities that make up the District. In addition, the project would benefit the 26 research and educational institutions within the region by enhancing their capabilities and collaborative efforts as they help to educate a workforce for the new economy—in agribusiness, homeland security, business management, healthcare, tourism and hospitality, and information technology (to name a few). The project would also strengthen public safety agencies by facilitating communication and coordination. Finally, local government benefits would materialize in the form of greater transparency, participation and expanded access to library resources for our community.

The significant extent of this broadband network would meet many of the goals stated by the BTOP and would stimulate economic development by providing high-speed connectivity to the more than 15,000 small businesses in our region. This is especially important in that the unemployment rate for Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz counties for 2009 was 11.9%, 14.4%, and 11.2% respectively. Furthermore, for the month of January, 2010 the unemployment rate in Monterey County stood at 17.8%, for San Benito County it was 21.1%, and for Santa Cruz County it was 15%.

If I can provide any additional information to assist you in your decision, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Abel Maldonado".

ABEL MALDONADO
Senator, 15th District

AM/rg

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