

Re: Westport CASF project

To parties of record,

I am Michael Ireton, the president of Rural Broadband Now! and WillitsOnline LLC, and represent the applicant of the Westport CASF project.

We have experienced some unreasonable delays in the start of our project due to several factors, including some extreme difficulties in the proposed implementation of our middle mile solution for the project. It was determined after the project award that a wireless middle mile the way we had envisioned was likely not feasible due to several factors including Mendocino County wireless regulations, coastal commission zoning and other permitting factors. We advised the commission of same and indicated that we were going to investigate other possible middle mile solutions, which we have now done.

We investigated options using ATT, and received special construction quotes ranging between \$315,00 to \$345,000 for various services in order for them to be installed. The best option available was \$315,000 for ATT to build out it's ASE service, which would then have made the full suite of service available to us at our proposed location. Unfortunately, this high installation cost would further have required additional monthly services of \$5000 per month (exclusive of discounts and such) for sufficient bandwidth to achieve the project goals.

We indicated via email to staff that we were looking for another option and we failed to communicate with staff regarding our progress and findings. I sincerely apologize for this failure. We have determined that an alternate middle mile plan would be substantially better suited to the overall goals and aims of the CASF program and benefit the community, and result in a more sustainable project. We have investigated with the help of a reputable OSP fiber contractor and believe that the middle mile portion of the project should be a fiber connection running up the coast from Fort Bragg to Westport. The advantages would include low operating expenses as compared to leasing a lit service such as ASE from ATT, as well as enabling the project to offer the maximum technical DSL broadband rates instead of artificially limiting the subscriber speeds as originally specified in the grant application due to originally envisioned limited middle mile speeds.

I would like to ask for the opportunity to redeem the project and to be given the opportunity to demonstrate our ability to successfully complete it. With approval of a revised middle mile plan, we would be able to commit to starting the project within 60 days and timely completion. I would like to schedule a meeting to discuss with staff at your convenience.

Thank you
Mike Ireton