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FCC Mail Room

**HOMESHARE OF THE RAPPAHANNOCK AREA**

**Kitty Russell**  
**HomeShare Advocate**  
**An AmeriCorps \* VISTA Poverty Program Position**

**Supervising Attorney: William Botts, Executive Director at**  
**Rappahannock Legal Services**  
**618 Kenmore Avenue, Suite 1-a**  
**Fredericksburg, VA 22401**  
**1-540-371-1115, ext. 17**

**[krussell@rapplegal.com](mailto:krussell@rapplegal.com)**

**Before the Federal Communications Commission Washington, D.C. 20554**

**<http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs>**

Commission's Secretary, Marlene H. Dortch, Office of the Secretary, Federal  
Communications Commission, 445 12th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20554.

**RE: In the Matter of A National Broadband Plan for Our Future**  
**GN Docket No. 09-51**

**From: Kitty Russell, HomeShare Advocate**

**RESPONDING TO NOTICE OF INQUIRY**

**AND**

**REQUESTING ASSISTANCE FOR LOW-INCOME**  
**CLIENTS OF FOOD OR HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAMS**  
**WHO NEED TELEPHONE/INTERNET BUNDLED SERVICE**

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September 30, 2009  
Fredericksburg, VA

To: Acting Chairman Copps, and Commissioners Adelstein and McDowell

In February 2009, as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Congress directed the FCC to develop, by February 17, 2010, a plan to ensure that low-income and vulnerable Americans have access to broadband capability. The FCC issued a Notice of Inquiry (NOI) requesting comments by July 2009. *This writer's comment is made after July 2009 but contains an urgent, specific request for help now.*

MY ASSIGNMENT:

Responding to an economic downturn of several years duration, due to local conditions in Virginia and to concurrent national trends, Bragg Hill Family Life Center and Rappahannock Legal Services (legal aid) partnered to obtain a VISTA worker [me] to staff and grow a program, centered in Fredericksburg to benefit a multi-county planning district, and to provide affordable housing options. Our program's goals are a) to help low-income homeowners gain rental income in their residences to help them avoid foreclosure on those homes; b) to help individuals and small families secure stable shelter after experiencing extraordinary financial setbacks (medical treatment, divorce, bankruptcy, natural disasters, etc.); and c) to help residential owners, seeking extra income or chore-service or senior care or enhanced security or service opportunity as a "home mission", to be "matched" in shared housing agreements with well-screened tenant applicants willing to provide services or rent in exchange for stable, affordable shelter. Shared housing non-profits exist on a national scale [for example: Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon and St. Ambrose Homesharing of Baltimore have operated successfully for many years]. No "match-up" shared housing organization has existed in Virginia prior to ours, but our program's supporters are collaborating with other VA groups seeking to form shared housing programs state-wide.

In Virginia in the next few years, I estimate that 2000 persons or more will be helped to keep their homes, gain needed services or secure shelter through shared housing agreements, if all the regional research efforts produce operational programs. An affordable telephone and internet (beyond email) bundle, which is not now offered by any major carrier or vendor in Virginia, is needed to benefit our program's tenant clients and to:

1. advance low-income consumers' welfare, **Recovery Act § 6001(k)(2)(D)**;
2. encourage affordable housing options by extending "Lifeline" or "universal plan" services within community development efforts, **47 U.S.C. § 254(b)(1) and 47 U.S.C. § 151**;
3. enable independent living options for persons in housing support programs who are disabled or needful of regular medical counseling, **Recovery Act § 6001(k)(2)(D)**;
4. facilitate low-income shared housing program participants to find or improve their income by finding better work or training that leads to better jobs, **Recovery Act § 6001(k)(2)(D)**.

MY REQUESTS:

1. Please consider my letter as a request, to the FCC and FCC grant recipients and national carriers at large, for formation and authorization of a plan of bundled telephone and basic internet service, hopefully priced at \$25/month or less, for low-income persons and families receiving program support for food or shelter from approved public agencies and non-profits; to wit, enlargement of existing low-income pilot pricing is needed, **47 C.F.R. Part 54, Subpart E**.
2. Please forward, share or publish my request for the notice of anyone who will help obtain, develop or approve such a plan for residents of Virginia as soon as possible.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Kitty Russell, HomeShare Advocate

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