

**Before the  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Fostering Innovation and Investment in the Wireless Communications Market	)	GN Docket No. 09-157
	)	
National Broadband Plan for our Future	)	GN Docket No. 09-51

**REPLY COMMENTS OF THE GREENLINING INSTITUTE**

The Greenlining Institute (“Greenlining”) submits these reply comments in response to the Notice of Inquiry (“NOI”) in General Docket Nos. 09-157 and 09-51, seeking to encourage the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) to ensure that fostering innovation and investment in the wireless communications market will cultivate meaningful socioeconomic progress for the underserved.

I. Introduction to Greenlining and its Advocacy For Bridging the Digital Divide

Greenlining is a multi-ethnic public policy, advocacy, and research institute based in Berkeley, CA, that advocates on behalf of California’s 25 million minorities and low-income communities. More specifically, the Greenlining represents the interests of a diverse coalition of community-based organizations, minority-owned businesses, and civil rights organizations in California, including the state’s largest African American churches, the state’s largest community development organizations, and the state’s largest immigrant rights group. In addition, Greenlining works with some of the nation’s largest and most influential members of the minority media.

Access to quality wireless technology and broadband is essential. As such, Greenlining has extensively advocated the importance of ameliorating the digital divide at both the state and federal level. Greenlining testified on this issue alone before the California legislature, the California Public Utilities Commission, and the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual California Public Policy Conference. Today, Greenlining submits these comments to stress the importance of reviving and advancing the economy by bridging the digital divide.

## II. Closing the Digital Divide Requires Support for Investment and Innovation

The economy benefits when underserved communities gain access to technology and high speed Internet. Access to communication networks has become vital to the success of individuals and communities. Indeed, equal access encourages equal economic opportunity, educational advancement and democratic participation. Recognizing this, the Obama Administration has placed telecommunication industries at the forefront of new job creation, and these industries are poised to revolutionize our economy. IT technology and broadband penetration are becoming centerpieces of not just an economic *recovery* but a *re-creation* of the national economy.

The process of transforming the economy and closing the digital divide will create new entrepreneurial, wealth-building opportunities for those who need new avenues of economic advancement. The populace and the FCC's pioneering role in tackling the digital divides primes this Commission and telecom companies to lead this effort.

## III. Diversity Plays an Essential Role in Economic Growth

Diversity plays a key role in the economy's resiliency. A comprehensive and sustainable transformation in our economy requires a vision that infuses participation of the nation's increasingly diverse populace. The US Census bureau projects that by 2050, ethnic minorities will become a majority, comprising 54% of the American population. Accordingly, it is essential that the telecommunications industry prevent underserved communities and communities of color from falling behind. Instead, the telecommunications industry must capitalize on the nation's growing diversity in order for the United States to establish and sustain a competitive edge in the future communications market.

## IV. Greenlining's Research and Analysis Addressing the Digital Divide and the Depth of the Problems

Working with academics from institutions, such as USC, Stanford, Northwestern, Santa Clara University and MIT, Greenlining recently issued a report addressing the digital divide and the depth of

the problem. This report has been well received by the FCC<sup>1</sup>, and Greenlining respectfully provides additional comments in these proceedings in the form of the attached study entitled “Digital Inequality: Information Poverty in the Information.”

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Respectfully submitted,

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<sup>1</sup> October 2, 2009, National Broadband Plan Workshop: Diversity and Civil Rights Issues in Broadband Deployment and Adoption ([http://www.broadband.gov/docs/ws\\_27\\_diversity.doc](http://www.broadband.gov/docs/ws_27_diversity.doc))