



May 13, 2011

Marlene H. Dortch, Esq.  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

**RE: *Ex Parte Letter***

- WC Docket No. 11-10: *Modernizing the FCC Form 477 Data Program*
- WC Docket No. 07-38: *Development of Nationwide Broadband Data to Evaluate Reasonable and Timely Deployment of Advanced Services to All Americans, Improvement of Wireless Broadband Subscribership Data, and Development of Data on Interconnected Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Subscribership*
- WC Docket No. 08-190: *Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Infrastructure and Operating Data Gathering*
- WC Docket No. 10-132: *Review of Wireline Competition Bureau Data Practices*
- GN Docket No. 10-25: *The Future of Media and Information Needs of Communities In A Digital Age*

Dear Ms. Dortch:

This reports on a May 11, 2011 meeting with Zac Katz, Legal Advisor to the Chairman for Wireline, International, and Internet Issues, Steven Rosenberg, Chief Data Officer, and Nicholas Alexander, Associate Bureau Chief, Wireline Competition Bureau. Present from the Joint Center were Joseph S. Miller, Deputy Director and Senior Policy Director, Media and Technology Institute, and myself.

The purpose of the meeting was to brief the Commission on the Joint Center's recent publication, *Does Place Really Matter? Broadband Availability, Race and Income*, an analysis of recent data published through the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) broadband mapping program.

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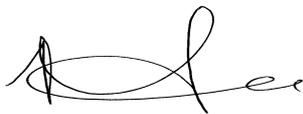
We discussed a recent evaluation of NTIA's broadband mapping data, which we completed in conjunction with The Ohio State University's Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity.<sup>1</sup> The report includes case studies of broadband deployment in Los Angeles, CA, Chicago, IL, and the state of South Carolina. Our findings included the following:

- Race was not a significant determinant of broadband deployment in low-income, high minority communities in all three regions. However, some disparity did appear in one of the case studies around race and broadband speed.
- Income was more significant in South Carolina and in select low-income areas with a high concentration of minority residents, such as Inglewood, CA.
- Adoption is still a prime issue because even with some level of competition, penetration rates remain low.
- The availability of cost data may also help illuminate the reasons for the apparent disconnect between broadband availability and adoption rates. However, the absence of that data made this impossible to study.

We discussed ways the Commission might revise Form 477 to accumulate data pertaining to the nexus between broadband access and adoption, pricing, and speeds. Cost data, even if average price were to be aggregated by census block data, would help research institutions such as the Joint Center improve their understanding of broadband adoption barriers, including their effect upon low-income consumers.

Understanding the nexus between variables that maintain the digital divide for people of color and low-income populations is at the core of the Joint Center's work. We look forward to future datasets from both the Commission and NTIA as we explore these critical questions.

Sincerely,



Nicol Turner-Lee, Ph.D.  
Vice President & Director, Media and Technology Institute  
The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

Attachments

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<sup>1</sup> See attachments.