

Tracey Cox-Marchione
85 Capisic Street, Portland ME 04102

19 July 2011

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

Re: Comment Deadlines Established Regarding the LightSquared Technical Working Group Report, IB Docket No. 11-109

Dear Ms. Dortch,

Growing up in Washington County, Maine, we learned a lot about interdependence. My community was better off than some because of a now-shuttered paper mill but we hardly lived with wealth or economic security as our economy was centered on a dying industry. Today, women who grow up in Washington County live five years less than the national average. Washington County, known as “the other state of Maine,” “the Bratislava of Maine,” or “The Welfare County” is the butt of many a joke about backwater life. Investments in infrastructure have been few and far between. While some of my friends and myself left Washington County to attend college and find economic opportunity elsewhere; our classmates still back home are stuck.

That said, it has some of the only remaining unspoiled landscapes in the country. Acadia National Park has nothing on the red granite cliffs overlooking the Atlantic in Red Beach. Grand Lake Stream is a quiet paradise. How could so much poverty be here? How can women live such shorter lives than anywhere else in the country?

The issue is that we are at the end of the technological line. While some places are considered “the last mile,” we’re miles beyond that. We have made great strides. The Three Ring Binder project, funded by ARRA funds is bringing DSL to many parts of Washington County still on dial-up. It is a great project and one that is sorely needed. Without broadband Internet, businesses cannot survive, let alone flourish.

I currently live in southern Maine where we have cable Internet. While urban areas are already far outpacing rural parts of Maine and the country, cities are laying fiber optics to

jump the next level of technology. While cities are pushing fiber optic, many people in Washington County are still on antiquated dial-up connections. There is no way rural Maine will ever be able to compete without the basic tools necessary for doing business in a modern economy, like cable Internet.

Washington County is making progress with the Three Ring Binder project, but there are still far too many places in Maine where the term broadband Internet is an oxymoron. It's time to make the proper investments to ensure rural Americans can compete effectively with urban Americans, spurring economic growth in local communities. The LightSquared project would bring 4G wireless broadband internet to the far reaches of rural America, ensuring we can finally bridge the digital divide.

It is projects like this that give me hope that the people I grew up with can enjoy economic opportunity without abandoning their local communities in rural Maine.

Sincerely,
Tracey Cox-Marchione

85 Capisic Street
Portland ME 04102