

Linda Higgins
Senator District 58
27 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155-1206
Office phone: (651) 296-9246

Received & Inspected

AUG - 4 2011

FCC Mail Room



Senate

State of Minnesota

July 29, 2011

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

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

Dear Ms. Dortch:

I am writing to ask the Commission's help to improve the access of low-income, minority and other underserved and underserved communities to essential telecommunications services, including wireless high-speed Internet and cell phones.

I represent an inner-city legislative district in North Minneapolis. About 60% of my constituents are members of racial minority groups. My constituents are also low-income, with about 45% living below 185% of the federal poverty level. While unemployment rates have increased for all groups during the recession, they were higher for minorities to start with and are now higher still. In short, my district needs economic growth and jobs.

One of the important tools for economic recovery is job growth in the technology sector. America is competing globally and my district must have access to wireless high-speed internet if technology companies are going to start and grow in Minneapolis. As the Commission found in its National Broadband Plan:

Broadband is a platform for social and economic opportunity. It can lower geographic barriers and help minimize socioeconomic disparities—connecting people from otherwise disconnected communities to job opportunities, avenues for educational advancement and channels for communication. Broadband is a particularly important platform for historically disadvantaged communities including racial and ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and recent immigrants.

I agree with this statement. However, the reality is that there is a great gap in access to Broadband by income. Households with incomes below \$20,000 have access to Broadband at less than one-third the rate of households over \$75,000. Yet access to Broadband is increasingly important for all Americans to actively participate in the workforce. Broadband can serve as a platform for educational, economic and social opportunities. It can also minimize economic disparities, since a growing percentage of jobs are tied to technology skills and knowledge.



My constituents are also facing challenges with rising cell phone costs. The consolidation of the cell phone market continues, with fewer options and less competition in the cell phone market. The application of LightSquared to provide enhanced nationwide Broadband service and cell phone coverage is good news for my constituents seeking to leave poverty behind and become active participants in the work force. It will also provide greater competition in the cell phone marketplace, which will make cell phone coverage more affordable for individuals and families.

I encourage the Commission to support LightSquared's proposal, which will make technology more accessible and more affordable for low-income citizens like those I represent.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Linda".

Linda Higgins

State Senator, District 58

Proudly Representing North and Downtown Minneapolis

7-28-11

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

Received & Inspected
AUG - 4 2011
FCC Mail Room

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

Dear Ms. Dortch:

I am writing to ask the Commission's help to bring reliable broadband Internet and cell phone coverage in rural counties.

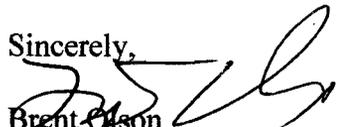
I am an elected county commissioner in Big Stone County, Minnesota. We are a rural county with no major cities or urban areas. Our residents live in small towns and on farms. Our county is aging as many young people that leave for college don't return because of the lack of jobs and opportunity.

A top priority for our county board is economic development and job creation. We believe that Broadband wireless is a key component of economic growth and the future economy. However, Broadband is just a dream for most residents of our county. The lack of wireless broadband internet service limits the types of employers that our county can attract. This is a big barrier to economic growth and job creation at a time we are already facing challenges

Our county is being left behind in the race for technology-related jobs and economic growth.

I understand that the Commission is currently reviewing an application by LightSquared that will address this lack of access to reliable Broadband wireless and cell phone coverage in rural communities. I encourage the Commission to act promptly on this and other proposals that will provide opportunities to rural America to compete in the global technological competition.

Sincerely,


Brent Olson
3Rd District Commissioner
Big Stone County, Minnesota

No. of Copies rec'd 0
DATE