

ALA American Library Association

February 21, 2014

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

RE: WC Docket No. 13-184

Dear Secretary Dortch:

On February 18, 2014, Stacey Aldrich, Deputy Secretary for the Office of Commonwealth Libraries, Jarrid Keller, Acting Deputy State Librarian, and Marijke Visser, Assistant Director, American Library Association Office for Information Technology Policy (ALA) talked by phone to Charles Eberle, Bryan Boyle, Mark Walker, Kate Dumouchel, James Bachtel, and David Strickland, all of the Technology Policy Access Division, FCC. The following topics were discussed:

Both Pennsylvania and California have completed a comprehensive review of the broadband connectivity of libraries in each state. Findings from the assessment in California show that 27 percent of libraries are still using a T1 line and 40 percent have speeds under 5Mbps (roughly the equivalent of home broadband). Two percent of libraries report speeds of 500 Mbps to 1Gbps. About 50 percent of libraries show that they are at full capacity of the available speeds. There are twenty different ISPs in California that provide service to libraries.

In Pennsylvania there are 452 library jurisdictions that are responsible for their own connectivity. Of these, a little more than 300 libraries are part of some type of library system. Forty-four percent are part of a WAN which helps manage the network for those libraries. There are two education networks in Pennsylvania KINBER, a research and education network and a network of 29 intermediate units. Costs vary widely in Pennsylvania from a few hundred dollars to more than two thousand dollars for a T1 line. In collaboration with the Pennsylvania Broadband Director, Ms. Aldrich is working to improve connectivity in Pennsylvania public libraries by: (1) Doing in depth assessments of public library networks in regions of most need. Ms. Aldrich is working with Mr. Keller to merge elements of the California survey tool and elements from the Pennsylvania assessments to create a comprehensive broadband assessment tool that can be used by any public library (2) Broadband training for library directors, staff, and trustees, and (3) overlaying where libraries are located with the state broadband map to identify the best opportunities for libraries to connect to high-capacity broadband at affordable rates. The assessment has identified which libraries are most in need of an upgrade.

Mr. Keller and Ms. Aldrich also discussed driving factors for increasing library connectivity to as much as 1Gbps for all libraries. Both states have seen an increase in library technology usage, and especially an increase in use of library Wi-Fi. Pennsylvania is currently working with local libraries to determine how many are tracking Wi-Fi usage. Both Mr. Keller and Ms. Aldrich emphasized the need for building scalable connectivity for libraries that allow for future growth. Often when a library upgrades to higher capacity, it is quickly filled.

California's broadband assessment report can be accessed on the state library website http://www.library.ca.gov/lds/docs/Public_Library_Broadband_Assessment_2014.pdf. The results of the Pennsylvania assessment are forthcoming.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marijke Visser', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Marijke Visser
Assistant Director,
Office for Information Technology Policy
American Library Association
Washington Office