



Rancho Navarro Association

P. O. Box 334

Navarro, CA 95463

707.895.2721

March 3, 2014

Letter – Expression of Interest VIA ECFS

Chairman Thomas Wheeler
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel
Commissioner Ajit Pai
Commissioner Michael O’Rielly
Jonathan Chambers
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW 20024
Washington, DC

Re: Expression of Interest – Rural Broadband Experiments Connect America Fund, WC Docket No. 10-90

Dear Chairman Wheeler, Commissioners, and Mr. Chambers,

This letter is to express the Rancho Navarro Association's interest in participating in the Rural Broadband Experiments announced at the January 30th FCC Open Meeting. While we do not have a project to propose, we take this opportunity to document the need in the Rancho Navarro community for high-speed Internet service. We respectfully ask the Federal Communications Commission to consider our area’s need when making decisions regarding the Rural Broadband Trials and any future initiatives related to the Connect America Fund.

Background

Rancho Navarro was developed in 1976 as a rural subdivision approximately 2.5 miles northwest of Navarro, California, located north of Hwy 128 and between Masonite Road and Flynn Creek Road. There are 137 parcels, each averaging about 12 acres. Of these, 105 have been developed with housing or other structures. About 75 lots have full-time to half-time residents, while the other lots are occupied seasonally in the summer. The community is governed by the Rancho Navarro Association, a homeowner's common interest association under the Davis-Stirling Act. Our residents are diverse, including both families and single households. A number of our residents live below the poverty line and many are living on fixed incomes. Residences are scattered throughout the area and are not close together. We are connected with underground

copper telephone lines and much, but not all, of the community has access to electricity. Some of our families live "off the grid."

Currently, our only access to the Internet is via "dial-up" services on a land-line telephone or via satellite, which is expensive and often slow and unreliable, especially in cloudy or rainy weather. Some spots in Rancho Navarro can also get cell phone signals, but for many those signals are spotty and often unreliable. Most residents rely on satellites or dial-up services, if they get any Internet service at all.

Viable and reliable Internet access would allow the Rancho Navarro residents to communicate with and to participate in the broader world. They would be able to work online from their homes and to develop online businesses. They would be able to access additional education by taking online classes to improve their skills. School children would be able to have the same opportunities to study and do research online as do their urban and suburban counterparts. Good online access would also aid in meeting medical, fire, and other emergencies.

Geographic Territory

Rancho Navarro is just beyond the northern end of Anderson Valley in an area of ridges and hilltops that fall down to the Navarro River. It has a steep and heavily forested terrain. The nearest store for light grocery items is the Navarro Store in Navarro, which is about a ten minute drive. It takes about 45 minutes to one hour via automobile to reach Fort Bragg and about one hour to reach Ukiah, the two largest of the towns in the region. Boonville, a very small town, is about 30 minutes away, and the nearest city is Santa Rosa, just under 2 hours away. Rancho Navarro has two entrances, one at Flynn Creek Road and one off of Masonite Road. Our roads are private, maintained by the Rancho Navarro Association. They are mostly one lane, chip-sealed roads, and individual parcels generally have dirt or gravel roads. There are underground copper telephone lines that pass throughout most of the community and AT&T has a remote terminal with fiber connected. There is the large fiber optic cable all along Flynn Creek Road, with a right of way on our property, but bypassing our community. It seems unfair that the cable carries communication to places far away, but leaves us unconnected. At present, the best type of broadband service in this environment might be DSL through our telephone lines. We would like to see broadband/internet available throughout our community and accessible to all income levels of our residents.

Proposed technology

Given the steep terrain and heavy forestation of the area, it would seem that a DSL system might work best in our community. Buried copper telephone lines are already in place and there is an AT&T remote terminal with fiber connections. We would be interested in learning more about new innovative technologies and networks, however, we need to keep the costs at an affordable level for all of our residents, many of whom are on low and fixed incomes.

Existing Providers

Existing providers include AT&T, with landline telephone service only and via buried copper lines, Exede (Wildblue) and Hughes Net satellite companies, and local ISP providers via dial-up bandwidth. The Internet satellite services range from \$59 to \$129 a month, depending on download/upload allowance. These services are not always reliable, depending on the weather,

time of day, and number of subscribers in the area. There are also limits placed on the data allowance, and additional charges accrue when that allowance is exceeded. Dial-up access is, of course, extremely slow and cumbersome.

List of Anchor Institutions

- Community Centers: Rancho Navarro Clubhouse/Community Center located at 19100 Appian Way, Navarro, CA 95463.
- Fire Station: Anderson Valley Volunteer Fire Department Station 143L located at 19100 Appian Way, Navarro, CA 95463

Thank you for considering our Expression of Interest in your decisions about the amount of funding that will be allocated in the Rural Broadband Experiments. We commend the FCC in this effort to connect rural communities and are ready to help you close the digital divide.

Sincerely,



Margaret Bond
Board Member and Treasurer



Robert Sowers
Board Member and President
Rancho Navarro Association