

HANA BROADBAND COMMITTEE

March 6, 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 Trials Connect America Fund, WC Docket No. 10-90

Dear Chairman Wheeler, Commissioners, and Mr. Chambers,

This letter is to express Hana Broadband Committee’s interest in participating in the Rural Broadband Trials announced at the January 30th FCC Open Meeting. While we do not have a project to propose, we take this opportunity to document Hana and the District’s need 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

Hana is a remote community of 1,300± on the East side of Maui in the state of Hawaii. The East Maui district covers about ¼ of Maui with a population including Hana of about 2,200. This includes four population areas; Keanae, Nahiku, Hana, Kipahulu. Like most of Hawaii, Hana was probably first settled between 500 and 800 AD by Polynesian peoples. The first sugar plantations opened in 1849. By 1883 there were six plantations operating in the district until the last one closed in 1946. Most work now is in tourism, horticulture, construction, cattle or government. Income is low and the cost of living is high forcing many who have jobs to also hunt and fish for subsistence. Hana is a difficult place to find work and has one of the highest concentration of native Hawaiians, who are at or below the poverty line.

Hawaii Political Structure

Hawaii existed as a governorship until it became a state in 1959, subsequently the state has continued with a centralized government. The state runs all public schools and universities, hospitals, libraries and airports and vital statistics including all deeds. Each island has one or two counties. The counties handle fire, police, building, zoning, road maintenance and water distribution. There are five counties in Hawaii. Each county has a mayor and a county council to represent individual communities. There are no cities.

HANA BROADBAND COMMITTEE

There are traditional Hawaiian names which identify specific areas, but no official boundaries are set. There are no “districts” in Hawaii for water, schools, parks, paving, sewer, or anything else. All electric power is done by Hawaiian Electric, and it’s wholly owned subsidiary on Maui called Maui Electric Company (MECO).

Geographic Territory

Maui was formed by two dormant volcanoes now appearing as mountains, with a wide valley between them. The valley is home to the county seat, the major airport, most of the medical and shopping resources and the electrical generation plants. Hana is located on the eastern end of Maui reached via the Hana Highway which is a 52 mile long narrow winding road along the cliffs of Maui’s northern shore. The drive takes approximately two hours from central Maui and passes through or by small communities on the way. Maui is just below the Tropic of Cancer and Hana is on the windward tropical side of the island with annual rainfall of between 80 -100 inches depending on the location. Maui is the second youngest island in the Hawaiian chain and the eastern side is distinguished by dense jungle and rugged wavering cliffs dropping straight into the ocean for much of the northern the shore. This makes it difficult to use line of site microwave transmission to reach the outlying communities.

Proposed technology

The optimal way to bring broadband service to the most folks in east Maui is through fiber optic cable on the existing high voltage primary distribution lines as in the Chattanooga TN model. Maui Electric relies on imported fossil fuel to run their generators. With solar and wind power available they have been moving towards “Smart Grid” technology as a way of reducing carbon emission and the high cost of electricity on Maui. The “Smart Grid” as of yet has not been extended to east Maui. They have a need to install fiber optic if they are to create a “Smart Grid” that will reach the majority of East Maui and we have a need for a fiber optic trunk line to the same places. Among other options, we are exploring the idea of working through the “County of Maui” to tie together their need to complete the grid and our need for expanded television and broadband service. By having excess fiber optic resources leased from MECO by service providers such as Time Warner Cable and or Hawaiian Telcom, high quality, high speed internet service could be provided to a much wider area of Hana, and to our communities of Kailua, Kaenae, Nahiku and Kipahula which at this time have no service at all except for individual residential satellite dishes. Wireless internet service providers (WISP) companies could also rapidly deploy in these communities if they had a fiber optic head end in each population area.

Existing Providers

In all of east Maui, only a small portion of Hana is served with cable Internet and TV. The service is microwaved to the Hana airport and distributed by Time Warner Cable to homes and businesses through coaxial cable. Currently packet loses makes file downloading frustrating, and outages cause business interruptions. For example; there are thriving tropical flower businesses in east Maui. Each flower farm prepares air bills on the FedEx web site before the driver arrives. When the Internet is down, the air bills are laboriously prepared by hand, delaying the FedEx driver at each stop. By the time he makes the two hour return to the main airport he has missed today’s plane and all the perishable shipments are delayed by one day which is disastrous for the industry.

HANA BROADBAND COMMITTEE

Local or Tribal Government Participation

Hana Broadband Committee
Hana Business Council
Hana Community Association

Our Goals

1. Expand high quality high speed Internet to all of East Maui.
2. Enable video conferencing between our rural communities and their county and state governments to reduce travel time and costs.
3. Enable students to enroll in web classes from their homes.
4. Allow the FAA to monitor the Hana airport which is unattended (no control tower) to give the air traffic controllers at our main airport camera views of taxiways and landing strips as well as real time wind speed and direction and access to the local Hana assigned radio frequency.
5. Explore using two way radio repeaters, fed by fiber optic cable, so our police, fire and ambulances no longer have dead spots.
6. Allow the people in these rural communities to have access to real estate documents at the Bureau of Conveyances without flying to Honolulu.

List of Anchor Institutions

Hana High and Elementary School
Hana School and Public Library
Hana Health Clinic
Hana Fire Dept.
Hana Police Dept.
Hana Division of Public Works & Water Dept.
Hana Dept. of Motor Vehicles
Hana Post Office
Hana Bank (Bank of Hawaii branch)
Hana Pre-School
Hana Dialysis Center (Hui Laulima O Hana)
Hana Community Center:
 Hana Council Office
 County Parks Office
 Maui Community College / University of Hawaii Extension
 Hana Youth Center
 Hale Hulu Mamo (Senior Center)
 Hui No Ke Ola Pono (Hawaiian Health)
 Queen Lilinokalani (Hawaiian Service Organization)
Keanae WMCA
Nahiku Community Center (Under Construction)

HANA BROADBAND COMMITTEE

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William R. Sides II". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "W" and "S".

William R. Sides II
Co-Chair
Hana Broadband Committee
Hana Business Council
Hana, Maui, Hawaii