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Kashia Band of Pomo Indians
of the Stewarts Point Rancheria

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**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 the Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of Stewarts Point Rancheria’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 our Tribal Reservation’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

The Kashia’s Reservation was established on Tribal Trust Land in 1916 on approximately 40 acres of ridge top land in a remote area about 5 miles east from the Pacific Coast Highway 1 at Stewarts Point. Kashia families have occupied homes on the 40 acres continually since this time. Due to the remoteness of the Reservation, it has always been extremely difficult for residents to find employment, thus incomes of residents have historically been extremely low. With the arrival of Internet services, urban communities have been able to engage in a new job market via the Internet, but lack of viable Internet services on Kashia’s Reservation has made it impossible for residents to engage in that same job market, or to enjoy the other many benefits that the Internet can provide. Currently, the location is served only by satellite, and service is very poor. Most cell phone service providers’ reception is also very poor; communication between residents

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and the outside world is correspondingly dismal. In order to improve the economic standing of residents while enabling them to remain in their cultural homeland, we must provide viable Internet connection. This will allow residents to complete on-line courses, to apply for jobs on-line, and obtain on-line work from home.

There other important reasons why Kashia needs viable Internet connection. Due, again, to the remoteness of the Reservation, our residents have difficulty in getting medical care they need. Fortunately, SCIHP (Sonoma County Indian Health Project) sends physicians to the Reservation, but they cannot access their medical records without viable Internet connection. This makes it impossible for them to provide adequate services. We also have a school for residents' children, and unreliable Internet connection limits students' ability to receive instruction, study, and complete homework at the same level as students in urban areas.

Lastly, we are just finishing a Community Center on the Reservation where we plan to provide many services for residents such as a library, access to computer training labs, and other services which cannot be provided without a viable Internet connection.

With the proposed assistance, we will be able to provide schoolchildren the ability to achieve the same access as other students, be able to provide computer training to children and adults, including on-line access to education, job searches, on-line employment, be able to provide other services for which computers are needed, such as adequate medical treatment as a result of access to records, lab results, etc

Geographic Territory

Kashia's Reservation is located on a Pacific coastal ridge top. There are currently 17 single family dwellings, a grade school, water treatment facility and Community Center. All of these improvements are on relatively flat terrain, but the land falls away once outside of these areas, and can be quite steep and heavily forested. The Reservation is approximately 90 minutes from any urban area and Tribal Offices, hospitals, social services, etc. There are just three routes in and out of the Reservation. It is 30 minutes or more to the nearest small town and grocery store. Some residents walk 5 miles to the nearest 'convenience store.' The roads are one lane in areas, and bad weather can result in trees down on the routes in and out of the Reservation, limiting access to emergency services. Existing satellite services don't function in a reliable manner, and cell phone service is hit or miss.

Proposed technology

The technology needed at this remote location would be the equivalent to a T-1 line, at a minimum. Ideally, fiber line is needed to provide the necessary services to the Tribal Community.

Existing Providers

The only existing providers are satellite service providers such as Hughes Net, or local ISP providers who provide only dial up bandwidth.

Local or Tribal Government Participation

Sonoma County Indian Health Project (SCIHP)
Fort Ross State Park

List of Anchor Institutions

Schools: Kashia School (public school) for grades K-8

Libraries: Kashia Library, located in the Community Center

Healthcare: SCIHP (Sonoma County Indian Health Project) Medical Services, located in the Community Center in a dedicated space

City offices: Kashia Housing, Environmental and Cultural Offices, located in the Community Center

Community Centers: Kashia Community Center, with computer lab, commercial kitchen for service to elders, and which serves as an emergency shelter

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,



Teresa Romero
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Stewarts Point Rancheria
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