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March 7, 2014

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
Washington, DC 20024

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

**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 Virginia's Region 2000 Local Government Council 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 Virginia's Region 2000'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

Virginia's Region 2000 consists of the City of Lynchburg and the Counties of Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford and Campbell with a population of just over 250,000. There are over 2,000 square miles of rural areas in the counties we serve and they have very spotty levels of broadband services. The more urbanized rural areas within our region have broadband, but the more sparsely populated areas are not.

Geographic Territory

Virginia's Region 2000 has a topography of rolling hills at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The counties of Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford and Campbell are significantly rural and need better broadband connectivity. It is likely that a wireless based technology will likely most cost effectively serve the sparsely populated area when combined with a fiber based system in the greater populated areas.

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Proposed technology

Two of the rural jurisdictions, Amherst and Bedford, along with the City of Lynchburg share a regional public safety radio system comprised of three towers in Amherst and four towers in Bedford. It may be cost effective to utilize the infrastructure from this public safety communication system to provide broadband in underserved rural areas of these and the neighboring counties of Appomattox and Campbell.

We work closely with the Center for Advanced Engineering and Research that could use funding to establish mobile radio test-beds throughout Virginia's Region 2000 to evaluate levels of wireless service and effectiveness.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gary Christie
Executive Director

GFC/mdp

EC: Mike Davidson, Campbell County
Marjette Upshur, City of Lynchburg
John Spencer, Appomattox County
Harry Schickling, Bedford County
Bob Bailey, Center for Advance Engineering and Research
Clarence Monday, Amherst County
Matthew Weaver, Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development