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Agency of Administration

April 25, 2014

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

Re: **Modernizing the E-rate Program for Schools and Libraries WC Docket No. 13-184**

Dear Secretary Dortch:

The Vermont Department of Libraries provides services and programs to all types of libraries statewide, including 183 independent public libraries. In Vermont, our small rural public libraries are very often the only place for citizens to go to access the Internet for a wide variety of online and digital content.

We are now seeing increased interest and need in in our public libraries for creating and making available local digital content, including local history and archives, community-created content (e-books, videos, photographs, objects) and educational/learning resources of all kinds for access by Internet users. This unique content will be of interest to local residents, Vermont citizens, students at all levels, genealogists, public officials, libraries worldwide, and Internet users around the globe.

Demonstration Project of the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA)

I have read the proposed *DPLA Local* demonstration project submitted by the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) and want to register the support of the Vermont Department of Libraries. The DPLA has had the interest and support of state library agencies over the past few years as their e-platform has grown to include over 4,500,000 digital works of all kinds from libraries, museums and other cultural institutions from all fifty states. We want to make sure that the digital content held or created in our nation's public libraries is widely accessible in digital format.

Most Vermont public libraries are small and the cost and required expertise of creating local e-platforms is beyond the reach of these libraries. This is true for thousands of small libraries across the country. *DPLA Local*, funded with monies from the E-rate program, would allow libraries to "host and shape" their own collections – and would encourage local residents to use their local libraries, not only as community content *providers*, but also as centers of 21st century content *creation*. We know that libraries have always been hubs of life-long learning, and in order for our nation's libraries to meet the changing needs of citizen learning in the digital age, they need to successfully make this transition to cutting-edge learning platforms.

Our public libraries, accepting the challenge to meet the lifelong learning needs of citizens of all ages well into the future, expect to see the FCC "do something audacious." Commissioner Rosenworcel's words have great resonance and the FCC has an opportunity, in the modernization of the E-rate

program to really make a difference for millions of Americans who rely on the services of local libraries. We need to see expanded financial support in the E-rate program for:

- high-capacity fiber, wireless and mobile broadband and networks for schools and public libraries
- expanded access to digital content
- opportunities for the creation and sharing of digital content.

This expansion of high-speed broadband for libraries and the *DPLA Local* project can be a reality only with substantial changes in the E-rate program. In particular, we ask the FCC to strongly advocate for:

- a much-needed expansion of E-rate support for public libraries
- an increase to the E-rate cap for public libraries
- a gradual transition of E-rate support from POTS (telephone service) to broadband and digital services
- streamlined E-rate management, filings and record-keeping.

Thank you for this opportunity to file my comments and for your consideration of my strong support for the Digital Public Library of America's demonstration project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martha Reid". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Martha Reid
State Librarian