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VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL: broadbandrfi@ntia.doc.gov

Broadband Initiatives Program
Rural Utilities Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Stop 1599
Washington, DC 20250

Broadband Technology Opportunities Program
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce, HCHB Room 4887
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

**RE: NTIA and RUS Joint Request for Information:
Docket Number 0907141137-91375-05**

Dear Administrator Adelstein and Assistant Secretary Strickling:

On behalf of Governor Deval Patrick and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, attached please find comments from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development in response to the joint request for information issued by the Rural Utilities Service ("RUS") and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration ("NTIA") and published in the *Federal Register* on November 16, 2009.

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development has been active in implementing Governor Patrick's broadband initiative, and both the Director of Wireless and Broadband Affairs and the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Broadband Institute ("MBI") rest within our secretariat. Accordingly, we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the implementation of the Broadband Initiatives Program ("BIP") and the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program ("BTOP").

The development and implementation of these programs in the short amount of time available was a significant accomplishment, and we commend the RUS and the NTIA for administering a successful first round application process. Through the MBI, and in partnership with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, the Commonwealth submitted middle-mile infrastructure, public computing center, and sustainable broadband adoption applications for western Massachusetts, where our digital divide is most acute, for the first round of BIP / BTOP funding. In addition, Governor Patrick prioritized BTOP applications from the City of Boston and OpenCape, Inc. in his written submission to the NTIA on October 14. Through this experience, Massachusetts believes it has a useful perspective from which to offer suggestions for improving and streamlining the implementation of BIP and BTOP going forward.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the next, and final, funding round for BIP and BTOP. Massachusetts is committed to working with the RUS and the NTIA to help ensure that these programs fulfill the goals of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to expand and enhance broadband capabilities in the United States, create jobs, and create a new foundation for growth in America.

Sincerely,



Gregory Bialecki

Secretary,

Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development