

CARMEL J. ANGELO
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**COUNTY OF MENDOCINO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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October 22, 2012

Ms. Cathy Emerson, Co-Manager
Northeastern & Upstate CA Connect Consortia
Center for Economic Development
California State University
Chico, CA 95929-0765

RE: Letter of Support Regarding the Northern California Regional Middle Mile Infrastructure (NCRMMI) Broadband Project

Dear Ms. Emerson,

The Mendocino County Board of Supervisors strongly supports Golden Bear Broadband (GBB) LCC's Northern California Regional Middle Mile Infrastructure (NCRMMI) project proposal. We further support GBB's pursuit of grant funding from the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) with a matching private investment in order to underwrite the capital costs of deployment.

The NCRMMI project will interconnect sixteen counties of northern California, bringing their broadband connectivity more closely into parity with the rest of the state. These counties have a total population of over 1.6 million (2010 Census) with a land area comprising 28% of the state. Agriculture and tourism are the two top industries of this region which has long suffered from chronic underdevelopment, particularly with the decline of resource-based industries, which has been exacerbated by the continuing economic downturn.

Mendocino County specifically has long been plagued by high rates of unemployment (currently 11.5%) and accompanying high rates of poverty. While the County is embarked on a multitude of strategies to improve our economy, there is nothing more critical to our future than up-to-date broadband connectivity. Surveys performed by the Broadband Alliance of Mendocino County (BAMC) show that roughly half of county residents remain on dial-up and many more access the internet through satellite services that are expensive and unreliable.

From a regional perspective, 35 of California's 111 federally recognized tribes reside in the geographic area that would be served by the NCRMMI project. Without broadband, these tribes, as well as the general community, have difficulty attracting investment capital, have a more difficult time educating their children, and lack access to modern services such as telemedicine.

Upon approval of CASF funding, GBB will implement a comprehensive plan for NCRMMI deployment that leverages existing infrastructure and builds new infrastructure, interconnecting multiple service points and forming a diverse and redundant, multi-loop, fiber-based network throughout much of northern California.

Without CASF funding, this critical broadband infrastructure will simply not happen, leaving over 1.6 million Californians to remain on the wrong side of the digital divide.

The Mendocino County Board of Supervisor strongly supports Golden Bear Broadband LLC's Northern California Regional Middle Mile Infrastructure project application.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of John McCowen in black ink.

John McCowen, Chair
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

cc: Tom West

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