



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Chief Information Officer

Washington, D.C. 20230

July 1, 2009

Mr. Alex Hunt
Chief, Information Policy Branch
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Hunt:

The Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) requests emergency review of a new information collection request entitled, "Public Computer Center Application and Sustainable Adoption Application Requirements."

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed the "American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009" (Recovery Act) into law (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, Pub. L. 111-5, 123 Stat. 115 (2009)). The Recovery Act provides NTIA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Utilities Service (RUS) with \$7.2 billion to expand access to broadband services in the United States. The Act recognizes the growing importance of access to broadband services to economic development and to the quality of life of all Americans. Specifically, the Recovery Act tasks RUS, NTIA and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) with leading the federal government's efforts to begin the process of dramatically expanding the reach and quality of broadband services.

RUS and NTIA are required to prescribe a Notice of Funds Availability to implement the provisions of the Recovery Act. The rapid disbursement of the funds available under this program is important because of the short time frames imposed by the Recovery Act and to address the economic crisis facing the country. A commitment to transparency in the award process and rigorous reporting requirements will help ensure accountability.

RUS and NTIA Recovery Act programs implement new authorities. Specifically, the Recovery Act appropriates \$2.5 billion for RUS to extend loans, loan/grant combinations, and grants to projects where at least 75 percent of a USDA-funded area is in a rural setting that lacks sufficient access to high speed broadband service to facilitate rural economic development. RUS has developed the Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP) to fund broadband infrastructure in qualifying areas.

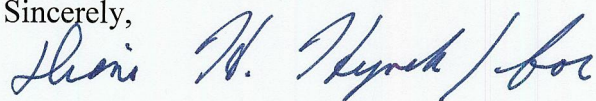
The Recovery Act also appropriates \$4.7 billion to NTIA to provide grants for broadband initiatives throughout the United States, including unserved and underserved areas. The NTIA program is called the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP). BTOP funds will be available through three categories of eligible projects: Broadband Infrastructure, Public Computer Center, and Sustainable Adoption. Of the \$4.7 billion appropriated to NTIA,

At least \$200 million will be made available for competitive grants for expanding public computer center capacity. In addition, at least \$250 million will be available for competitive grants for innovative programs to encourage sustainable adoption of broadband services. NTIA is tasked to spur job creation, stimulate long-term economic growth and opportunity, and narrow gaps in broadband deployment and adoption. This emergency review request includes the forms applicants will complete corresponding to the type of project for which they are requesting funding. On behalf of NTIA, RUS is separately sponsoring the submission of the joint Broadband Infrastructure Application.

Recovery Act funding authorization expires on September 30, 2010; however, demand for program funds is immediate. The emergency review and approval will allow the agencies to provide needed resources, allowing for opportunities for economic improvements and a better quality of life. NTIA requests that the Office of Management and Budget conclude its review and approval of this emergency information collection by July 6, 2009, so that RUS and NTIA can begin accepting applications for the national broadband initiative created by the Recovery Act.

We appreciate your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Suzanne Hilding / for". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Suzanne Hilding