



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Chief Information Officer

Washington, D.C. 20230

December 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 (DOC/NTIA) requests emergency review of an information collection entitled, "NTIA Broadband-Match Web Tool."

Congress, through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, directed the Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) and DOC's NTIA to expand broadband access to unserved and underserved communities across the U.S., increase jobs, spur investments in technology and infrastructure, and provide long-term economic benefits. The result is the RUS Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP) and the NTIA Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP). BIP will make loans and grants for broadband infrastructure projects in rural areas. BTOP will provide grants to fund broadband infrastructure, public computer centers and sustainable broadband adoption projects.

For the second round of funding, NTIA is contemplating the use of a "comprehensive communities" strategy aimed at funding middle-mile projects to anchor institutions in the community, such as libraries, colleges and potentially hospitals or public safety organizations, ideally with commitments from last-mile providers who would connect the middle-mile projects to residential end users. Seeking out this type of partnership might be burdensome to potential applicant partners and non-anchors that wish to participate in the BTOP program. NTIA decided, in coordination with the White House's Open Government Initiative that seeks to promote transparency, openness and collaboration, to create a tool that would allow larger anchor institutions, smaller satellite organizations, internet service providers and technical experts to find one another and create mutually beneficial proposals.

The information submitted to the tool by potential BTOP applicants will be used by other applicants to seek partners. For example, those small organizations interested in partnering with universities may search for the contact information of universities in their state wishing to engage smaller, community organizations, which they would subsequently use to contact them and propose a partnership. No specific action will be taken by NTIA to use of information, which will be maintained strictly as a resource for applicants. The information would be relevant to applicants between the tool's launch in mid December 2009 and the close of the second-round window, roughly in mid-March 2010. In order to make this tool available to the applicants by mid December, we request the conclusion of this review by **December 4, 2009**.

NTIA is confident this tool will facilitate the bold new partnerships and innovative broadband proposals envisioned by Congress when it established the BTOP program, and anticipated by the Administration from the earliest stages of its implementation.

We appreciate your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Shari W. Hynd / for". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Suzanne Hilding