



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Tim Pawlenty

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155

March 3, 2009

The Honorable Gary Locke
Secretary Designate
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Designate Locke,

Congratulations on your appointment as Secretary of Commerce. I am looking forward to working with you on many important issues.

President Obama's decision to include funding in the economic stimulus bill for broadband network construction presents a great opportunity. The funding will help bring jobs to rural communities and expand the penetration of broadband to areas that previously were unserved or underserved.

The stimulus bill lays out an ambitious schedule for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to disburse the funds for broadband network development. I encourage you to consider making block grants to states that have the interest and capacity to administer grants under the program quickly and professionally. If a block grant approach is used, two state agencies – the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and the Minnesota Department of Commerce – are prepared to work together to coordinate the effort in our state.

Minnesota is well prepared to act quickly and effectively, thanks to the work of the Minnesota Ultra High Speed Broadband Task Force which I convened last summer. The task force has already identified the level of broadband service needed in the state and is reviewing the technical and financial challenges of expanding broadband availability.

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Another entity, Connect Minnesota, is working with broadband providers to create detailed maps that pinpoint broadband coverage in the state.

Minnesota is off to a running start in this effort and looks forward to working with you in making this project a success. Please contact Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development Commissioner Dan McElroy at 651-259-7119 or Minnesota Department of Commerce Commissioner Glenn Wilson at 651-296-6025 as you work to disburse funds for broadband development.

Sincerely,



Tim Pawlenty
Governor

Cc: Commissioner Dan McElroy, Minnesota Department of Employment and
Economic Development
Commissioner Glenn Wilson, Minnesota Department of Commerce