



February 11, 2021

Douglas Kinkoph
Associate Administrator
Office of Telecommunications and Information Applications
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
Department of Commerce
Washington, D.C. 20230

Re: Tribal Broadband Connectivity Grant Program

Dear Mr. Kinkoph,

I write on behalf of our Tribe in response on your outreach to engage Tribes on The Consolidated Appropriations Act. As you know, the effects of COVID-19 have turned the digital divide that exists within Indian Country into a digital chasm. We believe that in order to create a broadband bridge, program funding as well as flexibility with those funds are essential to achieve success.

Broadband infrastructure is a prime component for any modern economic development strategy. As such, Tribal governments should be allowed to sole-source broadband contracts to Tribally owned telecommunications businesses and internet service providers. This would provide Tribal businesses, which are historically socially and economically disadvantaged entities, an opportunity to compete with well established and heavily capitalized technology companies. Furthermore, it would incentivize Tribes to collaborate with each other on complex projects, encourage economic self-reliance, and help build technological resilience among Tribal people.

The broadband needs of Tribal communities are as varied and individual as the Tribes themselves. Incentivizing Tribes to create and grow technology capabilities will further build capacity in Indian Country and help improve economic self-reliance. Our Tribe appreciates you reaching out to Tribal leaders and I look forward to learning more on how this important program will be administered and hopefully will enable our enterprises to access and engage.

Sincerely,

W. Ron Allen
Tribal Chairman/CEO