

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE  
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 40002 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0002 • (360) 753-6780 • [www.governor.wa.gov](http://www.governor.wa.gov)

October 27, 2009

David J. Villano  
Assistant Administrator Telecommunications Program  
Rural Utilities Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Stop 1599  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Villano:

I am writing on behalf of the citizens of the State of Washington to support the innovative proposal for the Washington Rural Broadband Cooperative (WA-RBC). This is an ARRA proposal submitted by the Tulalip Tribes of Washington to the Department of Agriculture (RUS-BIP funding) to build out critical middle-mile infrastructure. Phase I of the \$12.4 million request will provide fiber optic connectivity to three largely rural counties – and can be readily extended to other regions across the state. This sustainable “co-op” model provides for affordable, high-speed connectivity that will promote economic development, improve access to safety and health services, provide critical education opportunities to our youth and the workforce, and provide true broadband access to citizens in great need. Phase II funding will focus on last-mile connectivity at strategic “community access points” to ensure access to rural communities.

The WA-RBC is a unique partnership between tribal communities, “middle mile” public and private dark fiber providers, and backbone/long-haul broadband interchanges. Support from small business, schools, safety, local colleges and universities, political leaders, tribal leaders and citizens is strong – and continues to swell.

I offer my strongest support for the funding request submitted by the Washington Rural Broadband Cooperative which, if funded, will spur job creation and stimulate long-term economic growth; provide content and access to educational and workforce development resources; and interconnect communities with critical health and safety services. This proposal serves as a model for how broadband can be delivered to those most in need.

I encourage you to provide funding for this important initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christine O. Gregoire".

Christine O. Gregoire  
Governor

cc: Melvin R. Sheldon, Jr., Chairman of the Tulalip Tribal Council

