



April 28, 2010

The Honorable Gary Locke
Secretary of Commerce
United States Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20230

RE: Broadband Technology Opportunities Program, Broadband for the American Arctic
Proposal, EasyGrants ID # 4581

Dear Secretary Locke:

I am writing in response to NTIA's request for comments from Native American tribes. The Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska is the federally-recognized tribe serving the Unalaska area (census block groups 020160002001 and 020160002002).

We strongly support the Arctic Cable Company's Broadband for the American Arctic (BFAA) project, for the following reasons:

- BFAA will replace slow, unreliable satellite links with fiber optic cable, immediately and dramatically improving all communications. BFAA will ensure that service in our community meets the goals of the FCC's new National Broadband Plan.
- Our community needs the improvements in distance education that BFAA will bring. We understand that Arctic Cable Company is partnering with the University of Alaska to directly serve the University's Interior-Aleutians campus in Unalaska. With this connection, our indigenous people can take advantage of resources world-wide while remaining in the community.
- Public safety relies on communications. In our remote area, the ability to communicate quickly and reliably is a matter of life and death. BFAA enhances our safety.
- Fiber optic connectivity will finally offer high-speed broadband capabilities required to deliver critical telemedicine and economic development to our rural communities currently served only by inadequate satellite services.
- We understand that BFAA has received all state and federal permits and approvals. We have been consulted on environmental issues and approve of the project approach.



- The project is designed to support ongoing real-time oceanic, fisheries, and climate research and data acquisition. As a community on the front lines of climate change effects, we look forward to a dramatic improvement in these research capabilities.

Thank you for your consideration of our views on this matter of critical importance to our community. Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,



Denise M. Rankin
President

cc: Lawrence Strickling, NTIA
Ian Martinez, NTIA