



**NORTH GEORGIA NETWORK COOPERATIVE, INC. (NGN)**

**Fiber Optic Network Infrastructure Project**

**NEPA Environmental Assessment**

**Easygrants ID: 506**

**Submitted to:**

U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC)

National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

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Grant Application Support

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## **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The North Georgia Network Cooperative, Inc. (NGN) is a regional initiative by five Georgia counties (i.e., Dawson, Forsyth, Lumpkin, Union and White) to stimulate economic growth through improving the broadband infrastructure in the northern region of Georgia. The NGN has completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) in support of its application for grant funding from the U. S. Department of Commerce (DOC) National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP). BTOP provides funds for projects that afford comprehensive community infrastructure, public computer centers, or sustainable broadband adoption in unserved or underserved areas of the United States. Grant funding has been made possible through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009.

The NTIA, the lead federal agency which administers the BTOP grant program, has provided funding for NGN's infrastructure project for the purpose of enabling a new technology-based economy in North Georgia by deploying a regional fiber-optic network ring. The result will be the improvement of broadband service in unserved and underserved areas, stimulation of economic growth and job creation, and increased availability of broadband for local households, businesses, and community anchor institutions.

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended (16 USC 470 1966) with its implementing regulations in 36 CFR 800, and the BTOP's NEPA and NHPA Guidance for Round Two Applicants (DOC 2010), BTOP is required to integrate environmental values into their decision making processes by considering the environmental impacts of their grant awards. This EA has been prepared in support of the NGN BTOP grant application and to satisfy Special Award Conditions (SACs) associated with the grant award.