

**National Telecommunications and Information Administration
Broadband Technology Opportunities Program
Finding of No Significant Impact
Connecticut Department of Information Technology
Statewide Fiber Optic Network**

Summary

The Connecticut Department of Information Technology (DOIT) applied to the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) for a grant to install approximately 880 miles of new fiber optic cable (in new areas currently not served by the existing network, or off-net) and to upgrade approximately 5,990 fiber miles over approximately 1,627 route miles of existing fiber optic lines (on-net). The new middle mile and last mile infrastructure will connect approximately 660 community anchor institutions (CAIs) (e.g., public safety facilities, K-12 schools, libraries, and two community colleges) to the statewide fiber optic network. The new network will include the pulling of new fiber through existing conduit systems at network locations or placing new aerial fiber on existing utility poles within existing transportation rights-of-way (ROWs). The proposed action passes through 169 communities in all eight counties of Connecticut, and is referred to as the Statewide Fiber Optic Network (Project).

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) awarded a grant for the Project to DOIT, through BTOP, as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The funding must be obligated and the Project completed within three years. This timeline will comply with the laws and regulations governing the use of this ARRA grant funding.

BTOP supports the deployment of broadband infrastructure in unserved and underserved areas of the United States and its Territories. As a condition of receiving BTOP grant funding, recipients must comply with all relevant Federal legislation, including the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). Specifically, NEPA limits the types of actions that the grantee can initiate prior to completing required environmental reviews. Some actions may be categorically excluded from further NEPA analyses based on the specific types and scope of work to be conducted. For projects that are not categorically excluded from further environmental review, the grant recipient must prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) that meets the requirements of NEPA. After a sufficiency review, NTIA may adopt the EA, use it as the basis for finding that the project will not have a significant impact on the environment, and issue a finding of no significant impact (FONSI). Following such a finding, the BTOP grant recipient may then begin construction or other activities identified in the EA as the preferred alternative, in accordance with any special protocols or identified environmental protection measures.

DOIT completed an EA for this Project in April 2011. NTIA reviewed the EA, determined it is sufficient, and adopted it as part of the development of this FONSI.

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The Project includes:

- Installing approximately 880 miles of new aerial and underground fiber in existing transportation ROWs throughout Connecticut, consisting of approximately 875 miles of new fiber to be installed aerially by attaching to existing poles and pulling approximately 5.5 miles of new underground fiber through existing conduit systems at network locations (including attaching fiber to bridges or associated structures for water crossings);
- Upgrading approximately 5,990 fiber miles over approximately 1,627 route miles of existing fiber optic lines; and
- Directly connecting 660 CAIs by bringing fiber underground or attaching aerially to existing utility connections.

Based on a review of the analysis in the EA, NTIA has determined that the Project, implemented in accordance with the preferred alternative, and incorporating best management practices (BMPs) and protective measures identified in the EA, will not result in any significant environmental impacts. Therefore, the preparation of an EIS is not required. The basis for this determination is described in this FONSI.

Additional information and copies of the Executive Summary of the EA and FONSI are available to all interested persons and the public through the BTOP website (www2.ntia.doc.gov/) and the following contact:

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Purpose and Need

DOIT has identified several needs for the proposed project, including those related to the public safety services data network, expanded connectivity for the state's education network, and installation of additional point of presence (POP). Regarding the public safety services data network, a new integrated data network is needed to allow for additional connectivity between first responder sites. The existing stand-alone legacy network infrastructure systems used by public safety agencies minimally meets the bandwidth requirements for current use, and are inadequate for near- or long-term projected future data transmission requirements, including next-generation 911 functionality. To meet this need, DOIT will use approximately 2,000 miles of existing fiber and approximately 240 miles of new fiber to connect 108 existing public safety

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answering points (PSAPs), three administrative buildings, and the DOIT data center. Increased broadband connectivity will provide service to approximately 25,000 police officers, firefighters, and supporting staff members. Regarding expanded connectivity for the state's education network, many organizations are located in lower socio-economic areas where public Internet access is limited or nonexistent. The Project will provide improved broadband access in such areas and directly to approximately 120 of Connecticut's K-12 school districts, colleges and universities, public libraries, and public computing centers. Lastly, additional POP is needed to address a potential risk to public safety, health, critical infrastructure, key resources, and economic impacts. Currently, only a single POP provides network access and information technology service for the entire State of Connecticut. This single POP presents a potential risk in the event of a failure in the private carrier networks or catastrophic loss of the State's data center. DOIT will also develop a second POP for the State's identified critical data circuits, which will be located within an existing state facility. This alternate POP will provide uninterrupted broadband service to the state government, particularly during a major catastrophic event. The purpose of the Project is to provide affordable broadband service to meet clearly-defined needs for public safety, education, and network resiliency in Connecticut.

Project Description

The Project involves installing approximately 880 miles of new fiber optic cable, upgrading approximately 5,990 fiber miles over approximately 1,627 route miles of existing fiber optic lines, and connecting 660 CAIs throughout Connecticut. Fiber will be installed primarily on existing utility poles, while the remaining portion of the route will be installed underground within existing conduit. Construction will take place within existing transportation ROWs.

Approximately 875 miles of new aerial fiber optic cable will be installed along the Project route. At most locations, the Project will require the addition of a single cable on the existing utility poles. No repeater cabinets or similar equipment enclosures would be mounted to any pole or support structure. To hang the fiber, a hole will be drilled in the pole and a 3-bolt cable clamp will be inserted to attach the fiber to the pole. Cable reels, typically 20,000 feet long, will be connected via a single splice enclosure between reels. A splice enclosure, typically 12 inches by 30 inches in size, will be hung on the fiber line when splicing two fibers together at a spacing of 20,000 feet (or less if the route is not that long). It is anticipated that no new poles or conduits will be necessary. However, the need for pole or conduit replacement will be at the discretion of the pole owner, and not DOIT or its contractor. If a pole is deteriorated or unable to accommodate a new fiber cable, it is standard practice to remove the existing pole and place a new pole in the same hole. Disposal, recycling, or reuse of the removed pole will be at the discretion of the pole owner or utility provider, in accordance with applicable state and federal regulations. If the existing pole cannot be removed, a new hole will be excavated as close to the existing pole as is practical. The new pole will be inserted, the affected infrastructure will be transferred to the new pole, and the original pole will be cut above the surface and the buried segment will be left in place.

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Approximately 5.5 miles of new fiber are planned for installation within existing conduits. Where an existing duct is available, the aerial fiber will extend down the pole and then routed inside the existing conduit that is located next to the pole. A small portion of the new network also involves installation of fiber through existing conduit systems that are affixed to bridges or associated structures. In the event that crushed or damaged underground conduit is encountered, attempts will be made to free the blockage. If unsuccessful, an alternate route will be selected using existing aerial or other existing underground conduit. If it is determined that an alternate route using existing aerial or other existing underground conduit does not exist, DOIT or its contractor will request the conduit owner to repair or replace the crushed conduit.

Upgrades to an estimated 5,990 fiber miles will consist of activating the existing lines. A splice connection will be made where a proposed fiber segment meets an existing fiber segment by installing a splice enclosure on the line or using an existing splice enclosure if one exists near the proposed connection. The splicing will be completed by a utility worker in a bucket truck parked in the road or on the road shoulder.

Last mile connections to the anchor institutions will include utilizing existing underground or aerial pathways, or a combination, depending on individual site requirements. Based on initial site reviews, installation of new underground conduit is not anticipated to complete final connections to CAIs. Therefore, no construction or ground disturbing activities are anticipated.

Alternatives

The EA includes an analysis of the alternatives for implementing the Project to meet the purpose and need. NTIA also requires that an EA include a discussion of the no action alternative. The following summarizes the alternatives analyzed in the EA.

Preferred Alternative. As noted in the Project Description, this effort will include installation of approximately 880 miles of new fiber optic cable, upgrading approximately 5,990 fiber miles over approximately 1,627 route miles of existing fiber optic lines, and creating 660 CAI connections.

No Action Alternative. No action was also considered. This alternative represents conditions as they currently exist in Connecticut. Under the no action alternative, new middle mile and last mile infrastructure would not be constructed. Many rural communities would continue to be unserved or underserved with respect to broadband internet access. Additionally, broadband services would not be provided to CAIs in the Project area. The EA examined this alternative as the baseline for evaluating impacts relative to other alternatives being considered.

Alternatives Considered But Not Carried Forward. DOIT considered installing a less extensive network than the Preferred Alternative. However, this alternative was eliminated from further consideration due to its inability to meet the purpose and need. Different configurations of aerial and underground installations were also considered. An alternative network that relies solely on aerial installation is infeasible given the realities of the existing utility infrastructure, land use,

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and topography, and was eliminated from further consideration. An alternative that utilizes more underground conduit may be able to adequately address the project purpose and need, but would introduce more uncertainty and potential delay into the installation process since the discovery of crushed conduit cannot be reasonably assessed prior to the construction phase. Consequently, an alternative network configuration that uses more underground conduit was eliminated from further consideration due to the increased potential for construction delays and environmental impacts compared to the Preferred Alternative. DOIT also considered an all-wireless telecommunications network. However, wireless technology is not a viable alternative because of the inability to provide the capacity or speed needed to fully meet the purpose and need, and the greater potential for ground disturbance and associated environmental impacts.

Findings and Conclusions

The EA analyzed existing conditions and environmental consequences of the preferred alternative and the no action alternative in 11 major resource areas, including Noise, Air Quality, Geology and Soils, Water Resources, Biological Resources, Historic and Cultural Resources, Aesthetic and Visual Resources, Land Use, Infrastructure, Socioeconomic Resources, and Human Health and Safety.

Noise

This Project will have no impacts on noise during long-term operation. However, short-term increases in ambient noise levels are expected during the construction period. Noise created by machinery used during installation will be temporary and localized in nature. To reduce noise impacts, construction activities will occur during daylight hours. Noise levels are not expected to exceed current traffic-related noise levels in either rural or urban areas. Based on these considerations, no significant impacts on noise are expected to occur as a result of Project implementation.

Air Quality

Potential impacts on air quality will be limited to the construction period. Direct emissions from construction equipment during fiber installation on existing poles and within existing conduit are not expected to produce adverse effects on air quality. Lane closures, detours, and construction vehicles accessing the project area could cause traffic congestion, which could increase motor vehicle exhaust emissions. However, if lane closures are necessary during construction, they will be temporary and minimized by implementing appropriate traffic management techniques.

A short-term minor increase in the use of fossil fuel and associated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions will occur as a result of Project construction. The Project would release an estimated 54.2 metric tons of equivalent CO₂ emissions, which is well below the presumptive effects threshold (25,000 metric tons of CO₂ equivalent). Construction equipment will be operated and maintained in accordance with Section 22a-174-18(b)(3)(C) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (RCSA) to minimize exhaust emissions. Based on implementation of these BMPs, construction of the planned network is not expected to have significant adverse impacts on air quality.

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Geology and Soils

The Project will be installed in existing transportation ROWs, on existing poles, or through existing conduit. Because new poles or conduits are not expected to be necessary, the Project is not expected to require any ground disturbance. However, if new poles or conduits are needed, utility owners will replace a utility pole or underground conduit using their own contractors. In addition, only small areas of disturbance will occur at any one time, and appropriate BMPs will be used to minimize the potential for soil erosion and sedimentation during any pole or conduit replacement. Any disturbed area will be restored to preconstruction conditions. With these measures in place, the Project is not expected to result in significant adverse impacts on geology or soils.

Water Resources

Project construction activities are not likely to result in impacts to water resources. The entire project will include aerial installation on existing poles in exiting transportation ROWs, underground fiber using existing conduit, or using existing conduit systems associated with bridge crossings. No new conduit is anticipated to be required for installation of new fiber on bridges or associated structures. Additionally, no construction activity (i.e., pole replacement, conduit replacement, or ground disturbance) is proposed along the new fiber optic network segments. Upgrades to the existing fiber will result in activation of the existing lines. Work will generally be performed within the road surface or other developed portion of the existing transportation ROWs. Additionally, none of the proposed underground fiber optic lines are within mapped Connecticut wetland soils. Existing and proposed fiber optic lines associated with the preferred alternative are within horizontal flood zone boundaries throughout the state. However, based on vertical elevations of the proposed aerial and bridge conduits, the fiber lines will not be placed within the actual floodplains. If it is determined that ground disturbance is unavoidable, coordination with the applicable resource agencies would be required, including the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CTDEP) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). BMPs will also be used to minimize the potential for soil erosion and sedimentation for any pole or conduit replacements that are determined to be necessary.

Approximately 228 miles of existing fiber optic lines and 160 miles of proposed aerial fiber optic lines are located within public drinking water supply source water areas. No proposed new underground fiber optic lines are within public drinking water supply source water areas. In the event that new underground conduit must be installed, however, based on field conditions, the Connecticut Department of Public Health, Drinking Water Section will be contacted to confirm whether the new conduit is proposed in public drinking water supply source water areas.

There are approximately 108 miles of existing fiber optic lines and 31 miles of proposed aerial fiber within designated Aquifer Protection Areas. Approximately 3.5 miles of proposed aerial fiber are within the Pawcatuck River sole source aquifer area located in eastern Connecticut in the town of North Stonington. Approximately 2.8 miles of proposed aerial fiber and approximately 9.1 miles of existing fiber optic lines are located within the Pootatuck River sole source aquifer area located in Newtown, CT. No significant direct or indirect impacts to

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groundwater resources are anticipated since no ground-disturbing construction activity is proposed or anticipated in these areas (e.g., pole replacement, conduit replacement, or ground disturbance). DOIT has initiated consultation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for confirmation on the review and approval requirements under the EPA Sole Source Aquifer Program. EPA review and approval will be required only if ground disturbance is more substantial than anticipated or the installation of new poles becomes necessary within a Sole Source Aquifer Area.

Approximately 21.3 miles of proposed aerial fiber, 0.8 miles of proposed underground fiber, and 173 miles of existing fiber optic lines are located within the mapped Coastal Boundary. There are no existing or proposed fiber optic lines within a mapped area of the Coastal Barrier Resources System (CBRS) as defined by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Based on reviews of known and mapped coastal resources, including the potential for visual-coastal resource impacts, no significant direct or indirect impacts to coastal resources are anticipated given that the proposed fiber optic lines will use existing overhead utility poles and underground conduit, and no ground disturbance is anticipated. Additionally, the Project would not affect the coastal barrier since the project is located outside of CBRS areas.

The Project will include crossing two Wild and Scenic Rivers along the fiber route. A portion of the proposed aerial fiber line crosses a tributary of the East Branch Eightmile River along a bridge overpass on State Route 85 in Salem, CT. Another portion of the proposed aerial fiber optic line crosses the Upper Farmington River along a bridge on State Route 20 and State Route 318 in Barkhamsted, CT and Route 219 in New Hartford, CT. No significant direct or indirect impacts are anticipated to the natural, cultural, or recreational values of designated Wild and Scenic Rivers since the proposed fiber optic lines will be installed inside the existing bridge conduits.

By avoiding construction in waterways and implementing erosion and sediment control BMPs, DOIT will be able to construct the network with no significant impacts on water resources in the Project area.

Biological Resources

The preferred alternative will result in minor impacts on biological resources. Noise and human activity associated with new fiber installation are expected to disturb some wildlife species, but these effects will be minor and temporary. No construction activity (i.e., pole replacement, conduit replacement, or ground disturbance) is proposed along the new fiber optic network segments. Upgrades to the existing fiber will result in the activation of the existing lines. Work will generally be performed within the road surface or other developed portion of the existing transportation ROWs. Therefore, minimal or no change to wildlife habitat or vegetation would result. In the event that a bird nest is encountered on a structure (bridge or utility pole) and must be disturbed to install fiber, the species of bird present will be confirmed by a wildlife biologist or ornithologist and an application for a take permit will be filed with the USFWS in accordance with applicable regulations. In addition, removal of inactive nests of migratory birds, if encountered, will also require consultation and possible permit approval by the USFWS.

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DOIT consulted with the USFWS and CTDEP regarding potential impacts of the Project on biological resources. In a letter dated January 3, 2011, the USFWS stated that based on the information currently available, no federally-listed or proposed, threatened or endangered species, or critical habitat are known to occur in the Project area(s). No further consultation is required by USFWS under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act for a period of one year from the date of their letter, unless additional information on listed or proposed species becomes available.

In a letter dated February 8, 2011, the CTDEP provided information on listed rare, state threatened, or endangered species within the Project area by line segment. CTDEP has determined that there are records of state-listed plant and vertebrate species along segments of the proposed fiber optic routes. DOIT will implement the recommended or required management measures provided in the February 8, 2011 letter to avoid or minimize impacts to these state-listed species. The recommended or required management measures provided by CTDEP include the following:

- Line 5727: use vegetation screens along the water's edge (wetland) to avoid removal or roadside vegetation and encourage and help the American bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) feed; also conduct work during the species' non-breeding season (September – March).
- Line 5784: conduct a botanist survey for and flag populations of Chestnut-colored sedge (*Carex castanea*) and Canadian anemone (*Amemone canadensis*) prior to conducting work in the vicinity – if any populations are identified, incorporate roadway lane closures and do not disturb the road shoulders; flag the known subpopulation of Handsome sedge (*Carex formosa*) documented to occur between telephone poles 1319 and 1320; consult with the CTDEP Wildlife Division about potential impacts to timber rattlesnakes (*Crotalus horridus*); and limit work in this area to the timber rattlesnake dormant period (October 31 – April 1).
- Line 5810: restrict vehicles, equipment, and foot traffic from roadside vegetation to avoid impacts on the trailing tick-trefoil (*Desmodium humifusum*), a state endangered species that has been documented along River Road (Route 32) south of Stafford Springs, CT.
- Line 5884: consult with the CTDEP Wildlife Division about potential impacts to timber rattlesnakes, and limit work in this area to the timber rattlesnake dormant period (October 31 – April 1).
- Line 5955: restrict vehicles, equipment, and foot traffic from roadside vegetation to avoid impacts on the blazing star (*Liatris scariosa* var. *novae-angliae*), a species of state special concern that has been documented to occur along South Main Street (Route 25) in Newtown, CT.

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- Line 5996: determine if habitat for the Eastern spadefoot toad (*Scaphiopus holbrookii*) and the blue-spotted salamander (*Ambystoma laterale*) occur in the vicinity of the project and take proper avoidance measures; perform work only during May through February in the Plainfield Cemetery area and the Quinebaug River area in Plainfield, CT, to minimize impacts to the blue-spotted salamander; perform work only during September through May in the same area to minimize impacts to the eastern spadefoot toad; in areas identified as having favorable habitat for either species, incorporate roadway lane closures to perform work from the road surface.

Based on this analysis and following the guidance of the USFWS and CTDEP, DOIT will be able to construct the fiber network with no significant adverse impacts on biological resources.

Historic and Cultural Resources

On November 5, 2010, a consultation initiation letter, including a detailed Project description, was sent by NTIA to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) at the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism. Following the initiation letter, DOIT engaged qualified staff at Fuss & O'Neill to analyze the archeological and architectural resources within the Project's area of potential effect (APE). A records check identified numerous historic properties, including both archaeological and architectural resources, located within the APE that are listed in the State and National Registers of Historic Places (NRHP). A letter summarizing the findings of the cultural resources review was submitted to the SHPO on December 17, 2010.

During the consultation process with DOIT, the SHPO raised minor concerns with the proposed work and the potential for adverse effects on historic properties. In a letter dated January 7, 2011, the SHPO responded that despite the number of historic properties within the APE, it appears that the DOIT project has a very limited potential to adversely affect Connecticut's heritage resources. The SHPO also addressed areas of concern, including the potential for indirect effects on historic architectural resources located within the APE and the potential for adverse effects on archaeological resources if utility poles within the APE need to be replaced. Based on the supplemental information provide by Fuss & O'Neill, the SHPO concurs that the installation of new cables and associated equipment is consistent with the existing utility facilities on the aerial poles and these activities will have no adverse effect on the viewshed of historic properties within the APE.

Furthermore, the new fiber optic lines proposed to cross bridges will be installed within existing utility conduits, and therefore will result in no visual alteration of the bridge structures. The SHPO also recommended that DOIT implement a cultural resources management protocol that would allow for an appropriate evaluation of the areas that require new ground disturbance to determine if any significant archaeological resources would be affected. DOIT will notify the SHPO, and consulting Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) or potentially affected Native American tribes, in cases where new ground disturbance is found to be necessary. In order to prevent unnecessary delays for project activities that have little potential to affect historic properties, the SHPO suggests that the recommended procedures be followed only when

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the area of new ground disturbance extends beyond a five-foot radius of existing utility poles or underground conduits. In addition, DOIT will hire a qualified archaeological consultant that meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards to assess any affected areas conforming to the sizes stipulated by the SHPO, and will prepare a written opinion for the SHPO and THPOs regarding the archaeological sensitivity of the proposed activities within such areas. The SHPO and applicable THPOs will review and comment on the submission and identify any additional recommended sensitivity assessments, related field surveys, and follow-up consultation prior to any disturbance of the ground. The SHPO determined that the Project will have no adverse effect on archaeological, architectural, or engineering resources listed in, or eligible for listing in the NRHP provided that DOIT follows the recommended procedures for supplemental review of areas of new ground disturbance.

Through the Tower Construction Notification System (TCNS), NTIA provided Project details to six tribes interested in the Project's geographical location (Connecticut). DOIT received responses from five tribes that were notified about the Project. Two of the five tribes responded via TCNS that there would be no impact to religious, cultural, or historical assets. One of these tribes also requested that the SHPO and Tribe be notified in cases of new ground disturbance that extends beyond a five-foot radius of existing poles or conduits. The remaining three tribes requested information for ground disturbing projects only. However, since the Project is not expected to involve any ground disturbance, additional information was not provided to these tribes.

All construction will be restricted to previously disturbed areas. If any cultural material is discovered during construction, the SHPO, THPOs, and interested tribes will be notified immediately and all activities halted until a qualified archaeologist assesses the cultural material. If any human skeletal remains or protected Native objects are uncovered during construction, construction will stop immediately, and all consulting parties will be contacted. Based on these consultations, guidance from the commenting agencies, and additional protective measures to be implemented by DOIT, the Project is not expected to have significant adverse impacts on historic and cultural resources.

Aesthetic and Visual Resources

The Project involves installation of fiber optic cable along existing transportation easements through existing underground conduit or attaching it overhead to existing utility poles. No new conduit is expected to be required to install fiber on bridges or associated structures. Neither of these fiber installation methods will result in a long-term effect on aesthetics of the Project area. The Project will have a short-term, minor impact on aesthetic and visual resources due to the presence of construction equipment and potential temporary road and/or sidewalk closures during fiber installation along public ROWs, including state forests, parks, and other recreational areas. If road or sidewalk closures are necessary during fiber installation, they will be temporary in nature and appropriate traffic and pedestrian management techniques will be implemented during the installation period. Accordingly, the preferred alternative is not expected to have a significant adverse impact on aesthetic and visual resources in the Project area.

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Land Use

The fiber will be installed in previously disturbed ROWs. Existing transportation corridors and areas immediately adjacent to the ROW (i.e., roadway pavement or adjacent shoulder) may experience temporary impacts due to the presence of utility trucks and work crews during installation of the proposed fiber. However, no long-term land use impacts are anticipated as a result of the fiber installation. Therefore, the Project will have no significant impact on land use.

Infrastructure

The Project's fiber route will be attached to existing utility poles or pulled through existing conduit systems resulting in no change to the existing utility infrastructure. There may be minor, short-term construction impacts on roadways as a result of aerial or underground fiber installation. Work will generally be performed within existing transportation corridors or areas immediately adjacent to the ROW, which may require temporary road or highway lane closures. If road or highway lane closures are not possible, alternate methods will be used, such as walking to the utility poles and climbing the poles to complete the installation. The Project will improve communications infrastructure throughout the state and is expected to result in improved transfer of information between public service facilities, schools, and local governments along the Project route. Overall, the Project will have a positive impact on infrastructure in Connecticut, and will not result in significant impacts to infrastructure.

Socioeconomic Resources

The Project will provide greater access to broadband Internet connectivity for Connecticut's K-12 school districts, colleges, and public libraries. The Project will also minimize potential risks to public safety, health, and the economy in the event of a failure in the private carrier networks or catastrophic loss of the State's data center. The Project will benefit low-income and minority populations that may currently lack access to the Internet or have inadequate capacity and/or bandwidth. Minority, low-income, and other residents will have greater access to educational resources and job seeking tools, resulting in direct and indirect economic benefits across the state. The Project will have positive impacts on socioeconomic resources, and will not result in significant impacts on existing infrastructure.

Human Health and Safety

It is unlikely that hazardous wastes will be encountered during Project installation, because construction will be completed within existing and previously disturbed ROWs. Ten Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) corrective action sites and 17 brownfield sites are located within 200 feet of the proposed fiber optic network; and 47 RCRA corrective action sites, 62 brownfield sites, and 3 Superfund sites located within 200 feet of the existing fiber optic network. In the unlikely event that implementation of the preferred alternative requires ground disturbance near a brownfields or RCRA corrective action site to replace a utility pole or repair or replace conduit, a more detailed assessment of the ground disturbance relative to the site will be conducted prior to construction.

DOIT will adhere to worker safety standards and procedures mandated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Connecticut Department of Transportation

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(CTDOT). Workers installing the fiber optic cable will follow construction safety procedures and appropriate traffic and roadside safety practices. With implementation of these protocols, the Project will not generate any significant adverse worker or traffic-related health or safety issues. Further, the new fiber will provide broadband service to an estimated 25,000 police officers, firefighters, and supporting staff members. The Project will enhance emergency and medical services and improve human health and safety throughout the Project area.


Cumulative Impacts

As described above, the Project will not have significant adverse impacts on any of the environmental resource areas evaluated in the EA. As such, no cumulative impacts on the environment are anticipated.

Decision

Based on the above analysis, NTIA concludes that constructing and operating the Project as defined by the preferred alternative, identified BMPs, and protective measures, will not require additional mitigation. A separate mitigation plan is not required for the Project. The analyses indicate that the proposed action is not a major Federal action that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment. NTIA has determined that preparation of an EIS is not required.

Issued:



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4/26/2011

Date