

National Telecommunications and Information Administration

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FRIENDSHIP EMPIRE ZONE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
TOWN OF FRIENDSHIP AND ALLEGANY COUNTY

Director
Wendell E Brown
wbrown@friendshipzone.org

March 16, 2009

2008
EZ Board

D. Clark

L. Collins

M. Doyle

K. Hills

D. Panton

M. Patachnick

K. L. Poye

S. Myers

L. Suck

R. Stark

R. Taus

W. Zacher

In regards to: Fiber build Project Support Letter

Donald Rychnowski, Executive Director

Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board
4030 Route 219, Suite 200
Salamanca, NY 14779

Dear Mr. Rychnowski:

The Friendship Empire Zone is located in Allegany County within the Southern Tier of New York State. This is a designation of four Empire Zone Contiguous Areas in need of economic development. These areas are located in Friendship, Airtz, Whitesville and Cuba, NY.

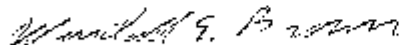
We are very interested in increased fiber optic bandwidth at an affordable price and support a project that would provide additional fiber infrastructure between Falconer and Whitesville, NY. This project addresses the need for redundancy, which businesses require to move forward with new projects. It would also provide an alternative for broadband requirements at an affordable cost, strengthening business models and allowing local businesses to compete with companies in larger metropolitan areas. In addition, this network opens up opportunities to expand business and retain New York based jobs in the future.

As a result of this new network, we estimate that over the next 3 years, that the 96 Empire Zone Certified Businesses in these Zone areas will employ 100 new jobs and retain their 2,982 current employees. In addition, these Empire Zone Certified Businesses in these Zone areas will make estimated investment of \$20 million in machinery, equipment, and capital as a result.

We view this as a necessary project not only for these Empire Zone Certified Businesses but also for global competitiveness of the companies within the region. This fiber build will remove a barrier that has prevented this rural region from competing on a level playing field with other parts of the country. The creation of this redundant network within the Southern Tier West region will directly and immediately benefit those manufacturing and commercial businesses. This redundant network will also benefit educational institutions, healthcare systems, and private and public entities as well as the residents by making greater services available to them.

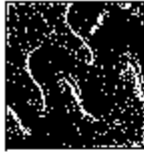
We support this very important project, which will directly provide enhanced broadband connectivity across rural New York State.

Sincerely,



Wendell E. Brown
Director Friendship Empire Zone

8001 STATE ROUTE 19N SUITE 170
JELMCOTT NEW YORK 14615
TEL 866-889-9096 FAX 866-256-8028
www.friendshipzone.org



**STEBEN COUNTY
INDUSTRIAL
DEVELOPMENT
AGENCY**

*Driving the Wheels
of Change*

July 7, 2009

NTIA
1401 Constitution Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Sirs;

I am writing to express the Steuben County IDA's full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

The Rural Telephone Companies in New York lacked access to competitively priced, redundant backhaul services until ION was born. Out of pure need, and developed on rural independent infrastructure, the concept of ION came to fruition. As you know, it has always been difficult to make a business model work for broadband services in rural Upstate New York, but each and every ION partner company has done it for over 100 years individually and over 1200 years combined. What better group to run a mostly rural statewide fiber network than the businesses that have been committed to and doing business in rural communities for their entire business lives? This rural telephone company foundation is the strength of ION, as we bring the know-how to offer great customer service, reliable services, and an unparalleled commitment to serve these unique rural areas. It is out of love for the State and a lifelong pledge to serve those rural areas that has allowed rural Upstate New York to benefit from the ingenuity, creativity, and growth of our independent rural phone companies.

It is important to note that ION has a history of neutral partnering, "cooperation", cooperating with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (Cable TV Companies, RLEC's, Wireless/Cellular providers, CLEC's, and private/public entities such as Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), CBN Connect, Southern Tier West, and Southern Tier East).

As we look at Broadband Services in New York State, ION has become the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and we believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

The ION network has already had a deep reaching impact on the upstate New York economy, has proven its solvency and sustainability, and has had a direct impact on

7234 Route 54 North • PO Box 393 • Bath, NY 14810-0393 • Phone: 607-776-3316
Fax: 307-776-5039 • E-mail: Info@SteubenCountyIDA.com • Web: www.SteubenCountyIDA.com



Schoharie County
OFFICE OF CLERK, AUDITOR & PURCHASING AGENT

P.O. Box 429, County Office Building
Schoharie, NY 12157
Phone: (518) 295-8347 Fax: (518) 295-8482



Board of Supervisors, Chairman
Earl Van Wazer, III

Karen Miller, Clerk
Sheryl Longstreu, Deputy Clerk
Karen Hathaway, Deputy Clerk

May 19, 2009

Independent Optical Network
Attn: Jim Becker, CEO/President
80 State Street
7th Floor
Albany, NY 12207

Dear Mr. Becker,

I have enclosed for your information a copy of a resolution that was adopted at the Schoharie County Board of Supervisors meeting on May 15, 2009. If you have any questions regarding this resolution please feel free to contact this office.

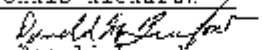
Sincerely,

Karen Hathaway, Deputy Clerk
Schoharie Co. Board of Supervisors

RESOLUTION NO. 56

TITLE: SUPPORTING THE EFFORT TO PROVIDE BROADBAND AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACCESS THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF NEW YORK

OFFERED BY:  Dennis Richards Who moved its adoption.

SECONDED BY:  Donald Brundow Chairman Rules & Legislation Committee

WHEREAS, broadband access includes critical carrier services, high speed Internet, television and voice services; and

WHEREAS, high speed Internet service is of major economic and social importance in today's world; and

WHEREAS, Schoharie County has a Telecommunications Task Force working toward improving broadband access; and

WHEREAS, the Telecommunications Task Force has conducted a public survey indicating strong support for broadband access throughout Schoharie County; and

WHEREAS, that study clearly shows that there are large portions of Schoharie County without broadband coverage; and

WHEREAS, development of self healing fiber rings as part of a crucial backbone network to connect homes, businesses, schools, government and health care services are important to delivering broadband to those users; and

WHEREAS, ION proposes the creation of technology agnostic, robust data backbone as a universal "on ramp" to the knowledge based economic mainstream and

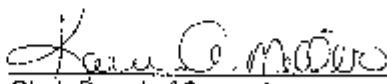
WHEREAS, this project is a critical network for high speed broadband service; now therefore be it hereby

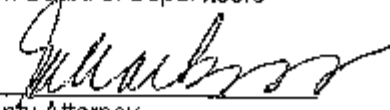
RESOLVED, that the Schoharie County Board of Supervisors supports ION's efforts to provide the availability of broadband access throughout New York State.

Dated: May 14, 2009
Filed: May 14, 2009

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY.

STATE OF NEW YORK
COUNTY OF SCHOHARIE ss:


Clerk-Board of Supervisors


County Attorney



Office of the President

February 3, 2009

Donald Rychnowski, Executive Director
Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board
4039 Route 219, Suite 200
Salamanca, NY 14779

Dear Mr. Rychnowski:

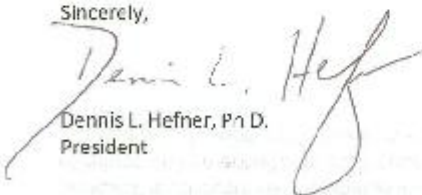
As the largest university in the western part of the New York's Southern Tier, SUNY Fredonia is very interested in and supportive of increased fiber optic bandwidth at an affordable price. Our campus fully supports the proposed project to provide additional fiber infrastructure between Falconer and Whitesville, NY. This project addresses the need for strategic redundancy and for critical connectivity. The project also provides an affordable alternative for broadband requirements, thus allowing local businesses to compete with companies in larger metropolitan areas with opportunities to expand business and retain New York-based jobs.

This new fiber path will enhance connectivity to SUNY Fredonia web-based services for current and prospective students and employees living in rural areas, broadening our outreach and online course offerings, and potentially increasing our student population base. The diverse routing provides fiber redundancy, allowing continuing academic and business procedures to take place in the event another fiber path is compromised.

We view this project as necessary not only for our university, but for global competitiveness of the companies within this region. This fiber project will remove a barrier that has prevented this region from competing on a level playing field with other parts of the country. The creation of this network within the Southern Tier West region will directly and immediately benefit educational institutions, healthcare systems, private and public entities, and individual citizens.

We fully support this very important project. Enhanced broadband connectivity across rural New York State is crucial for the future of our region.

Sincerely,



Dennis L. Hefner, Ph.D.
President

Office of the Provost
Saxon Drive
Alfred, NY 14802-1205
607-871-2137
Fax: 607-871-2339
www.alfred.edu

Alfred University

August 5, 2009

Donald Rychnowski, Executive Director
Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board
4039 Route 219, Suite 200
Salamanca, NY 14779

Dear Mr. Rychnowski:

As a business located in the Southern Tier of New York State we are very interested in increased fiber optic bandwidth at an affordable price and support a project that would provide additional fiber infrastructure between Falconer and Whitesville, NY. It would also provide an alternative for broadband requirements at an affordable cost, strengthening business models and allowing local businesses to compete with companies in larger metropolitan areas. In addition, this network opens up opportunities to expand business and retain New York based jobs in the future.

As a result of this new network, I/we estimate that over the next 3 years, we will employ three new jobs and retain our twenty-one current employees. In addition, our company estimates an investment of \$ 150,000 in machinery, equipment and capital as a result.

We are presently developing partnerships in Turkey, the United Kingdom, China and South Korea which will allow us to offer distance education to those regions of the world. Access to fiber is essential for us to be able to fulfill our mission in these locations. Alfred University must be able to compete internationally. For us to provide educational support in distant locations requires access to our international partners through the use of technology that depends on fiber.

We view this as a necessary project not only for our business but also for global competitiveness of the companies within this region. This fiber build will remove a barrier that has prevented this region from competing on a level playing field with other parts of the country. The creation of this redundant network within the Southern Tier West region will directly and immediately benefit educational institutions, healthcare systems, and private and public entities as well as the residents by making greater services available to them.

We support this very important project, which will directly provide enhanced broadband connectivity across rural New York State.

Sincerely,



William M. Hall, Ph.D.
Acting Provost
Alfred University



SUNY
Cobleskill

State University of New York • College of Agriculture and Technology • Cobleskill, New York 12043-1701 • 518-255-5011 • Fax 518-255-5333

August 11, 2009

Broadband Technology Opportunities Program
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
HCHB Room 4812
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230

Subject: Support for ION Broadband, ARRA Proposal

I am writing in full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act being submitted by ION.

As the provost of the State University of New York College of Agriculture and Technology at Cobleskill, a small agricultural college in a rural area of Upstate New York--and as president of the Schoharie County Chamber of Commerce-- I am daily made aware of the disadvantage to both education and business caused by the lack of wide access to broadband internet service here.

For our commuter students, this lack of broadband access often means they cannot participate fully in courses that have on-line components, nor may they be able to take summer school or intercession courses, which are primarily taught on-line. Added to this is poor access to library resources. If our students, K-16, are to be competitive, they must have access to and be comfortable with the latest technology.

Much of our business is agriculture, and lack of adequate access, or need to rely on expensive satellite access, places them at a disadvantage. Added to this, the county has been trying to bring more business and industry in, but without adequate internet access, many new firms look elsewhere; this greatly harms a poor county with one of the highest unemployment rates in the state.

Frankly, broadband access needs to be considered at the same level as access to electricity and telephone. This proposal being submitted by ION will mean that our young people will be more competitive in the world of tomorrow, and we as a County may get the shot in the arm we need to turn lives around.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne C. Myers'.

Anne C. Myers, Ph.D.
Provost



www.nysernet.org

385 Jordan Road, Troy, NY 12180
(518) 783 3984 fax (518) 783 3198

100 South Salina Street, Suite 100
Armen Building, Syracuse, NY 13210
(315) 413 0345 fax (315) 413 0146

NTIA
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Grant Administrators:

NYSErNet writes in strong support of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION and DANC, the largest New York State combined fiber optic backbone network. NYSErNet and some of its member institutions in the North Country have already derived enormous benefit from earlier builds. This proposed expansion would reach completely unserved areas, in the process giving greater redundancy through completing rings and reaching vital assets needing advanced infrastructure. ION and DANC are an essential part of the future of Broadband in New York State.

For twenty-four years, NYSErNet has provided the R&E backbone network in New York State. Our initial network was the first use of the Internet protocol outside of the US Defense Department. We currently run a DWDM optical backbone from New York City to Buffalo. NYSErNet also operates the primary R&E collocation facility in the northeast and one of the most important R&E peering points in the world, provides dark fiber for our members in New York City, runs a commercial-grade data center dedicated to our members' disaster recovery and business continuity needs, and is active at all levels in the national and international networking community.

With each of the many generations of network and network resources that NYSErNet has deployed we have, with our member institutions, pushed the envelope. Institutions located in New York City or near our PoPs in major upstate cities benefit immediately from robust access to our global peering point in Manhattan, business continuity center in Syracuse, or the scientific resources and supercomputers at institutions optically connected to our network. But institutions located at a distance face great challenges. As noted above, several in the North Country already reach our backbone robustly because of earlier DANC builds. This proposal will reach other critical facilities such as Griffiss Institute, serving Air Force Rome Labs and the many academic institutions in the inadequately served Utica/Rome area, connect spurs into rings, and in the process reach many areas that are underserved or totally unserved.

ION and DANC have a history of neutral partnering, "cooperation", cooperating with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (Cable TV Companies, RLEC's, Wireless/Cellular providers, CLEC's, and private/public entities). Particularly relevant

private/public entities). This history is particularly relevant here, as this proposal is part of a coordinated effort to also extend to the Southern Tier in a cooperative build by the Finger Lakes Technologies Group (FLTG) and the complementary Southern Tier West proposal. In aggregate these projects fundamentally alter the broadband map of New York State.

Previous DANC work in the Northern Tier and ION work there and in other parts of the State have demonstrated their solvency and sustainability. The DANC/ION proposal will reach critical national assets like the Griffiss Institute serving Rome Labs with its lead role on cybersecurity. It reaches anchor institutions in the Utica/Rome area and other parts of the North Country, and from these centers of excellence and engines of innovation will come the network enabled jobs. Complementing this, DANC will be the network provider for one of the FCC Rural Health Care awardees, providing transport for a host of medical institutions back to the NYSERNet PoP in Syracuse. NYSERNet and the NYSERNet community, anchor tenants on this infrastructure, will help sustain the innovations that create these jobs.

The DANC/ION proposal, and its counterpart in the Southern Tier, will bring advanced networking to vast new areas of New York. Expansion of the DANC/ION network is the kind of project that we all can and should support, as it goes far to make broadband available to a vast number of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, offers the ability to enhance services, and is a key component to providing affordable broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,



Dr. Timothy L. Lance
President and Board Chair, NYSERNet
Distinguished Service Professor, University at Albany



NEW YORK STATE TELECOMMUNICATIONS
ASSOCIATION, INC.
20 CORPORATE WOODS BOULEVARD,
STATE ARMY, N.Y. 17011
(315) 443-7700 • FAX (315) 443-9911
www.nysta.com

August 10, 2009

NTIA
Broadband Technology Opportunities Program
1401 Constitution Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20230

To: Walter E. May, Concern,

On behalf of the New York State Telecommunications Association's (NYSTA) Inc. exchange carrier members, I am writing to express our full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, one of the largest New York state fiber optic backbone networks in the state. ION's proposal will provide a more redundant, reliable, and less costly network solution for use by both public and private carriers, and ultimately, the citizens and businesses of rural New York. Thus, the proposal will directly advance the goals of the Act by providing a more economic solution in meeting the broadband needs of both the unserved and underserved communities that the expanded network can, and will, serve.

ION was created by the rural local exchange carrier NYSTA members and their ISP subsidiaries in New York to provide access to competitively priced, redundant backhaul services. These rural providers have a rich history encompassing the last 100 years in successfully meeting the telecommunications needs of rural consumers and the proposal being submitted by ION will continue to help them meet this mission and will further advance the goals of bringing advanced, reliable Broadband service throughout some of the most rural areas of New York.

ION has become a principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and we believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, other carriers will be able to better accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives to both small and large customers as well as anchor institutions in some of the more rural areas of the state.

It is for the above reasons that we submit this letter of support regarding the ION proposal.

Sincerely,

Robert R. Puckett
President.



GRIFFISS INSTITUTE

1000 Griffiss Blvd.
Rome, NY 13243
Phone: 315-477-1100
Fax: 315-477-1101
www.griffissinstitute.org

August 10, 2009

NTIA
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Sirs:

We are writing to express our full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION and DANC, the largest New York State combined fiber optic backbone network.

The Griffiss Institute (GI) is a 501(c)3 Technology and Business Incubator located at the Griffiss Business and Technology Park in Rome, New York. The GI is charged with developing and expanding high technology employment opportunities in the Mohawk Valley by partnering with the Air Force Research Laboratory /Information Directorate (AFRL/RI), private industry and academia. In fact, AFRL/RI has the GI on contract to transfer the world class technology from AF research to industry for commercialization and productization. We are relying on ION and DANC to build and provide the necessary infrastructure that the Griffiss Institute needs now and in the future. The incubator service at the GI supports high technology business development specifically focused on Information Technology with an emphasis on Information Assurance, Computer Forensics and Computer Security. These technology thrusts are key to our nation's needs. Connectivity to the GI will allow world class researchers a real time technology development vehicle to collaborate over high speed networks. Plans are in place connect the networks to a High Performance (Terra Flop) processor in the GI enabling new advanced means of developing and transitioning technology. It will also provide a test bed for developing new products leading to new economic stimulus. ION and DANC provide cost effective broadband services throughout rural areas in New York. I believe ION and DANC are an essential part of the future of Broadband in New York State.

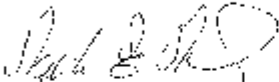
ION and DANC have a history of neutral partnering, "cooperation", cooperating with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (Cable TV Companies, RLEC's, Wireless/Cellular providers, CLEC's, and private/public entities such as CBN Connect, Southern Tier West, and Southern Tier East).

The ION and DANC open access networks have already had a deep reaching impact on the upstate New York economy, have proven its solvency and sustainability, and have had a direct impact on Broadband connectivity and job

creation in rural New York. It is now time to support the enhancement of these networks to close the gaps, provide further redundancy and affordability, and develop additional unserved and underserved areas in New York. Further development of ION and DANC's networks also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new areas of service or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

The expansion of the ION and DANC networks is the kind of project we can and should all support as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities and offers the ability to enhance services, provide affordable Broadband throughout New York and is a means for business stimulus via information research and development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William E. Wolf', written in a cursive style.

William E. Wolf, Director
Griffis Institute

National Telecommunications and Information Administration

Letters of Support

Letter of Support Senator Kirsten Gillibrand	1
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

July 24, 2009

NTIA
Broadband Technology Opportunities Program
1401 Constitution Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20230

To Whom It May Concern:

I am taking this opportunity to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

Rural communities in New York lack access to broadband services and that is making it hard for families and businesses to compete and succeed in these rural areas New York. ION has a history of neutral partnering, cooperating with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (Cable TV Companies, FLETC's, Wireless/Cellular providers, CLETC's, and private/public entities such as Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), CBN Connect, Southern Tier West, and Southern Tier East).

As I look at Broadband Services in the 23rd Congressional District and New York State, it is apparent that ION has become one of the principal carriers of rural Broadband traffic, and I believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network would be extremely helpful to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas of Upstate New York.

The ION network has had a deep reaching impact on the upstate New York economy, has proven its relevancy and sustainability, and has had a direct impact on Broadband connectivity and job creation in rural New York. It is now time to support the enhancement of the ION network to close the gaps, provide further redundancy and affordability, and develop additional un-served and underserved areas in New York.

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband to rural communities. Please know, that I certainly appreciate your positive consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Murphy". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Scott Murphy
20th Congressional District

CLAUDE W. LEVY
15601 NEW YORK AVE
LOS ANGELES, CA 90033

4412 W 11th Street
CULVER CITY, CA 90230
PH: 310-251-1144

WWW.LEVYGROUP.COM

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



JAMES L. SEWARD
SENATOR, 51ST DISTRICT

July 14, 2009

OPINION MINORITY MEMBER
STATE SENATE COMMITTEE
ON
REGULATORY
AND CONSUMER SERVICES
COMMITTEE
BY THE
SENATOR
FOR THE
LEGISLATIVE
AGRICULTURE

Broadband Technology Opportunities Program
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
HCHB, Room 4812
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

RE: ION Broadband
ARMA Proposal

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

Rural communities in New York lack access to broadband services and that is making it hard for families and businesses to compete and succeed in these areas. ION has a history of partnering with all carriers and competitors in a neutral manner, and has established relationships with a wide range of network providers.

As I look at broadband services in New York state, it is apparent that ION has become the principal carrier of rural broadband traffic, and I believe that further development of ION's broadband fiber optic network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the state. Further development of ION also gives all broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

The ION network has had a deep reaching impact on the upstate New York economy, has proven its solvency and sustainability, and has had a direct impact on broadband connectivity and job creation in rural New York. It is now time to support the enhancement of the ION network to close the gaps, provide further redundancy and affordability, and develop additional unmet and underserved areas in New York.

I would appreciate any consideration you may give to ION, and the grant application. If you need any additional information, please contact me at any time.

With best wishes, I remain:

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James L. Seward". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

JAMES L. SEWARD
State Senator

D. Sjhjt
Cc: Krystina Hilton



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

HELEN D. OTT
Assembly Member 127th District
Constituents: Columbia, Colkville,
Cortland, Craryville, Randolph and
Ulster Counties

RANKING MEMBER
Of the Labor Affairs and Pension Committee
Fiscal, Financial, Military Policy Task Force

COMMITTEES
Fiscal and Audit Oversight
Governmental Employees

August 5, 2009

Thomas Jensen
Massachusetts State Office
USDA, Rural Development
451 West Street, Suite 2
Amherst, MA 01002

Dear Mr. Jensen,

This letter is provided to offer my enthusiastic support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, New York's largest fiber optic backbone network.

Access to broadband services remains a critical priority for communities across New York, particularly our rural communities, as businesses, governmental institutions and educational facilities seek to be contributing members to the state economy. Much like the revolution caused by the availability of electricity to our homes and businesses in the early 1900's, broadband access offers the opportunity to transform how we live and work in an increasingly competitive and global society. While the New York State Legislature and the Governor have acknowledged the importance of supporting investment in critical infrastructure, state funding for such purposes has been woefully inadequate to date, with only \$5 million allocated statewide for broadband development in the previous fiscal year. The influx of federal funds through ARRA offers real opportunity to make the strategic changes needed to move our society forward.

In respect to ION's application, it is my belief that the company has a history of neutral partnering with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader by establishing relationships with all types of network providers including cable companies, RIJC's, wireless/wireline providers, CLEC's, and private/public entities such as the Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), CBN Connect, Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board, and its counterpart, Southern Tier East.

I believe that the enhancement of ION's Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, regional carriers, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN, Council, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION will also give all broadband carriers in New York the ability



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

PETER D. LOPEZ
Assemblyman, 127th District
One Unity Square, Albany, New York
Greene, Orange, Rensselaer and
Herk Counties

TRAINING MINORITY MEMBER
Governor's Advisory Task Force on Committee
Food, Farm and Wildlife Policy Task Force

COMMITTEES
Environment, Conservation
Governmental Finances

to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in rural New York, which, by state definition, is home to over 2.5 million residents- a population larger than roughly half the states in the nation.

Continued expansion of the ION Network will have a deep reaching impact on the upstate New York economy while promoting broadband connectivity and job creation in rural New York. It is my firm belief that timely public investment in the ION network will offer greater opportunity to the families, farms and businesses in New York State, and I strongly urge you to award their grant request.

Sincerely,

Peter D. Lopez
Assemblyman, 127th District

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Southern Tier East Regional Planning Development Board

575 State Street • Binghamton, NY 13901 • Phone: (607) 724-1327

Fax: (607) 724-1194 • E-mail: ste@sterny.org • www.sterny.org

Robert Augenstern, Director Richard E. McCormick, Deputy Director

August 3, 2009

Jim Becker
Independent Operators Network
30 State Street
Suite 700
Albany, NY 12207

SUBJECT: SUPPORT OF ARRA APPLICATION

Dear Jim,

I am pleased to write in strong support of the application of the Independent Optical Network (ION) for funding under the ARRA stimulus bill.

For the past two decades, as an Appalachian Local Development District, we have promoted and funded projects which have: promoted e-government through coordination of training of county IT personnel; involved 911 emergency services coordinators; underwritten the extension of telemedicine to provide services to rural areas; and supported the educational sector through distance learning projects. Recently we completed our 2009 update to our regional telecommunications plan.

The Southern Tier East portion of the ION proposal will further the high speed broadband accessibility of rural areas in the northern part of our region and the proposed open access structure directly furthers the private sector implementation of parts of our plan. In the event that the ION proposal is funded and implemented, it is our intent to build upon the ION open access back bone to extend high speed telecommunications access to additional critical telecommunication users within our region.

The private sector involvement represented by the ION application will have the dual benefit to our region of helping to preserve the existing small, mostly rural independent telephone companies, while extending the accessibility of our rural areas to an optical fiber network which will support commercial and community interests. Access to a fiber optic network will also play a critical role in the future economic development of this area as well as preserving many existing jobs.

In conclusion, may I urge that this ION application be funded, and indicate our willingness to be involved in as the ION Network evolves.

Sincerely,

Robert Augenstern, Director

cc: Kyrste Hiten
Joe Calzons at 518 563 4580



Southern Tier West

Regional Planning & Development Board

James Cooper, Chairman

Donald R. Rychnowski, Executive Director

August 6, 2009

Joe Calzone
ION Corporation
80 State Street, 7th Floor,
Albany, NY 12207

Dear Mr. Calzone:

As a regional planning board located in the southern tier of New York State we have continually looked a means to provide increased bandwidth at an affordable price to the entities across our service area. After discussions with representatives of ION Corporation I fully support a project that would provide additional fiber infrastructure between Falconer and Whitesville, NY. As I understand this project it would provide not only redundancy for our region of Chautauqua, Cattaraugus and Allegany Counties but it will also provide an alternative to the current broadband providers.

This project will provide a means for our areas business not only to remain in southwestern New York but also to expand their capabilities. This project addresses our need for redundancy, at an affordable cost, that our businesses require to move forward with new projects and new investments.

We view this as a necessary project not only for our business but also for global competitiveness of the companies within this region. This fiber build will remove a barrier that has affected this regions ability to compete on a level playing field with other parts of the country. We feel that the creation of this redundant network within the southern tier west region will directly and immediately benefit educational institutions, healthcare systems, private and public entities as well as the residents with greater services being available to them.

We fully support this very important project, which will provide enhanced broadband connectivity across rural New York State.

Sincerely,

Donald R Rychnowski
Executive Director

Southern Tier Central Regional Planning & Development Board



8 Denison Parkway East
Suite 310
Corning, NY 14830

Tel: 607/962-5092
Fax: 607/962-3400
www.stcplanning.org
E-mail: stcrpdb@stuv.ny.com

Marcia D. Weber
Executive Director

August 6, 2009

Broadband Technology Opportunities Program
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
HCHB, Room 4812
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

To the Review Committee:

Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board (STC) is strongly supportive of the ION application for funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

STC has been working since the 1980s to increase broadband service to our three counties of Chemung, Schuyler, and Steuben. In 2006, we completed a regional telecommunications study that outlined our telecommunications assets, gaps, and needs. This study has been updated over the past few months.

Through focus groups and other discussions, we have determined that our businesses, including agri-business, technology firms, and health care, are unable to develop fully because of the lack of broadband services as well as redundancy and diversity. The businesses could be expanded to provide more income and jobs (which are desperately needed in Upstate NY) if they had better access to these services. We are also in danger of losing existing businesses and being unable to attract new business with access that is insufficient for their needs.

Our education system has made tremendous progress in distance learning but requires increased broadband services to fully implement their plans and to reach the rural schools. Our libraries cannot now access the affordable high speed bandwidth that will bring needed training, government services, and knowledge to our rural region.

Local governments are trying to provide adequate services and contain costs, and they need increased bandwidth to do so. We have worked closely with their IT departments and their emergency services departments to determine their needs and possible solutions, and they, too, must develop increased bandwidth.

70% of our land area, the area outside of the major population areas, is not covered by either cable or DSL. The population living in that area is understandably frustrated by not having

[Serving Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben Counties](#)



Dulles State Office Building • 30 Washington Street, Suite 304 • Watkins, New York 13850 • Telephone (518) 785-2500 • Telefax (518) 785-2501 • TDD (518) 785-2502

Water and Wastewater Facilities
Watkins Park Station
23557 Rte. 30
Watkins, New York 13850

Telephone (518) 785-2644
Telefax (518) 735-2551
Emergency Telephone (518) 786-4100

Open Access Telecom Network
Dulles State Office Building
307 Washington Street, Suite 302
Watkins, New York 13850

Telephone (518) 785-2500
Telefax (518) 735-2551
Emergency Telephone (518) 669-3222

Solid Waste Management Facility
23400 Rte. Route 127
Redden, New York 13652

Telephone (518) 238-3226
Telefax (518) 238-3019

WWW.DA.NY.GOV

July 22, 2009

Mr. Lawrence E. Strickling
Assistant Secretary
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20330

Re: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal

Dear Mr. Strickling:

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

As a wholesale service provider in New York State, we are relying on ION to build and provide the necessary infrastructure that our business needs now and in the future. ION enables us to cost effectively connect our customers in Northern New York to other locations throughout rural areas in New York. I believe ION is an essential part of the future of Broadband in New York State.

Rural communities in New York lack access to Broadband services and that is making it hard for families and businesses to compete and succeed in these rural areas of New York. ION has a history of neutral partnering, "cooperation" (cooperating with all carriers and competitors) and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (cable TV companies, RLEC's, wireless/cellular providers, CLEC's, and private/public entities such as our network, CBN Connect, Southern Tier West, and Southern Tier East).

The ION network has already had a deep, reaching impact on the upstate New York economy, has proven its solvency and sustainability, and has had a direct impact on Broadband connectivity and job creation in rural New York. It is now time to support the enhancement of the ION network to close the gaps, provide further redundancy and affordability, and develop additional unserved, and underserved, areas in New York. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new areas of service or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

Very truly yours,

James W. Wright
Executive Director

DMW:JWW/ama



Saturday, August 08, 2009

NTIA
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am writing to express support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, a New York state fiber optic backbone network. My company is also a RUS BIP applicant, and we look forward to coordinating services with ION to share carrier traffic and provide redundancy.

ION has helped service providers to open and expand broadband services in many areas of New York State. ION has invested greatly in its infrastructure in order to develop their network. This has helped support the local economies, retain and create jobs, and develop a much-needed broadband infrastructure in many areas where there is little or no service available. ION has supported our company and we look forward to working with them to see mutual development and growth of our networks.

ION, like CBN Connect, is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of broadband to a vast number of rural communities, and helps drive economic growth inside these communities by enhancing services and making broadband more affordable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Howard Lowe".

Howard Lowe
President



BRIAN FISCHER
COMMISSIONER

STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
THE HARRIMAN STATE CAMPUS - BUILDING 2
1220 WASHINGTON AVENUE
ALBANY, N.Y. 12228-2650

RICHARD D. ROY
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

August 17, 2009

NTIA
Broadband Technology Opportunities Program
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to express my support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION & DANC, New York State fiber optic backbone network providers.

ION & DANC are interested in assisting governmental agencies and service providers to open and expand Broadband services through New York State. ION & DANC have invested in their infrastructure in order to develop a network across the state. This has helped to develop a much-needed Broadband infrastructure in areas where there is little or no services available.

With further development of the state's Broadband service community, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION & DANC also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

Projects of this nature have the potential to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities, which is where most of the Department of Correctional Services' facilities are located. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas J. Herzog".

Thomas J. Herzog
Assistant Commissioner
Chief Information Officer

Cc: Commissioner Fischer
Deputy Commissioner Roy



August 14, 2009

Ms. Anna M. Gomez
Acting Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
HCHB, Room 4812
Washington, DC 20230

**RE: Letter of Support for Development Authority of the North Country (DANC)
Network Growth and Adirondack Connect as Broadband Technology
Opportunities Programs**

Ms. Gomez:

I am writing to express our support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by the Development Authority of the North Country (DANC). If selected for funding, DANC Network Growth and Adirondack Connect will extend New York State's fiber optic network to multiple rural counties and extend a far reaching open access broadband network.

DANC's projects cover a number of counties with the largest areas of un-served and underserved census blocks. The grant will help DANC create alternative open access network. It will help drive down the cost of broadband services in the rural counties and provide reliable alternatives to broadband service subscribers. These infrastructures, once in place, can help medical and healthcare providers and other community support organizations in advancing education, training, and healthcare delivery.

I am confident that broadband technology and the innovative use of optic fiber network can stimulate the local economic growth, and foster a sustainable broadband user community in many rural areas in New York State.

Sincerely,

Hep Wang, Ph.D.
Deputy Commissioner & Chief Information Officer



National Telecommunications and Information Administration

Letters of Support

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Together, we're Leading Businesses. Leading Communities.™

March 24, 2009

Donald Rychanowski, Executive Director
Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board
4039 Route 219, Suite 200
Salamanca, NY 14779

Dear Mr. Rychanowski:

We applaud and greatly appreciate the efforts of the Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board to increase fiber optic bandwidth in the Southern Tier. The Chautauqua County Chamber of Commerce and the Manufacturers Association of the Southern Tier represent over 1,300 businesses in the Southern Tier including 24,000 employees. Our members are very interested in increased fiber optic bandwidth at an affordable price and support a project that would provide additional fiber infrastructure between Falconer and Whitesville, NY. This project addresses the need for redundancy, which businesses require to move forward with new projects. It would also provide an alternative for broadband requirements at an affordable cost, strengthening business models and allowing local businesses to compete with companies in larger metropolitan areas. In addition, this network opens up opportunities to expand business and retain New York based jobs in the future.

We view this as a necessary project not only for our business but also for global competitiveness of the companies within this region. This fiber build will remove a barrier that has prevented this region from competing on a level playing field with other parts of the country. The creation of this redundant network within the Southern Tier West region will directly and immediately benefit educational institutions, healthcare systems, and private and public entities as well as the residents by making greater services available to them.

We support this very important project, which will directly provide enhanced broadband connectivity across rural New York State.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Todd J. Trantum', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Todd J. Trantum
President/CEO, Chautauqua County Chamber of Commerce
Executive Director, Manufacturers Association of the Southern Tier

Chautauqua County Chamber of Commerce / Manufacturers Association of the Southern Tier
Dunkirk Branch 10785 Bennett Road / Dunkirk, New York 14048 / 716-366-6200 / Fax 716-366-4276
Jamestown Branch 101 West Fifth Street / Jamestown, New York 14701 / 716-484-1101 / Fax 716-487-0785
MTI Branch 512 Falconer Street / Jamestown, New York 14701 / 716-483-1833 / Fax 716-487-9599
website: www.chautauquachamber.org / email: cccc@chautauquachamber.org



August 5, 2009

NTIA
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

As a rural hospital system, including 5 hospitals and over 25 health centers, we are faced with many challenges in our goal to provide excellent and reliable care for the rural population. Adding to this challenge is the cost of and access to dependable and redundant broadband services. We are always looking to see how we can reduce costs and be more efficient in all that we do without compromising our patient care or services, the ION model fits in with that goal, with their low cost services, redundant infrastructure and proven reliability.

For Bassett, the potential of having cost effective broadband, with large capacity and reliable redundancy is imperative to offering care throughout our vast network of hospital and health centers. Since we depend on broadband, to support the telemedicine attributes of our system, including the PACS system and electronic medical records as well as others, it becomes not only an issue of cost; it becomes an issue of patient care.

ION has been a supportive partner in looking to address the needs of the rural communities and especially the needs of healthcare. With a history of neutral partnering, cooperating with all carriers and competitors, ION has worked closely with providers that we currently use in an effort to enhance services of and locations that have ION's reliable fiber backbone.

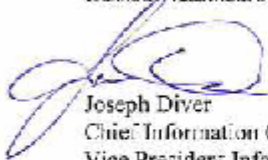
ION has become the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic through Rural New York, and I believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the viability of the rural areas throughout the State.

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,



Bertine C. McKenna, Ph.D.
Executive Vice President &
Chief Operating Officer
Bassett Healthcare



Joseph Diver
Chief Information Officer &
Vice President Information Technology
Bassett Healthcare



SYRACUSE UTILITIES, INC.

P.O. BOX 587 • 9585 BREWERTON RD. • BREWERTON, NY 13029

(315) 876-2021
FAX: (315) 876-2857

Friday, July 13, 2009

N/A
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20270

Dear Sirs:

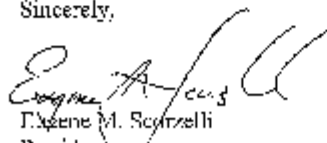
I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

ION has used Syracuse Utilities, Inc. as well as many local construction companies, investing in a large amount of infrastructure and technical components to develop their network. This has helped support the local economy, retain and create jobs, and develop a much-needed broadband infrastructure in areas where there is little or no services available. ION has supported our company and continues to support us through their own development and growth.

As we look at Broadband Services in New York State, it is apparent that ION is the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and I believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,


Eugene M. Scanzelli
President
Syracuse Utilities, Inc.



Thursday, July 09, 2009

NFLA
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20330

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

ION has used local technical and equipment companies and has invested in a huge amount of infrastructure in order to develop the network. This has helped support the local economy, retain and create jobs, and develop a much-needed broadband infrastructure in areas where there is little or no services available. ION has supported our company and continues to support us through their own development and growth.

As we look at Broadband Services in New York State, it is apparent that ION is the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and I believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,

Ben Viglietta
Contract Manager

161 CLEAR ROAD ■ ORISKANY ■ NEW YORK 13424 ■ USA
(315)736-2206 ■ FAX: (315)736-2285 ■ EMAIL: INFO@FIBERINSTRUMENTSALES.COM
WWW.FIBERINSTRUMENTSALES.COM

BLUEGLASS, LLC
PO BOX 275
CROWN POINT, NY 12928

Wednesday, July 08, 2009

NTUA
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Sirs;

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

The Rural Telephone Companies in New York lacked access to competitively priced, redundant backhaul services until ION was born. Out of pure need, and developed on rural independent infrastructure, the concept of ION came to fruition. As you know, it has always been difficult to make a business model work for broadband services in rural Upstate New York, but each and every ION partner company has done it for over 100 years individually and over 1200 years combined. What better group to run a mostly rural statewide fiber network than the businesses that have been committed to and doing business in rural communities for their entire business lives? This rural telephone company foundation is the strength of ION, as we bring the know-how to offer great customer service, reliable services, and an unparalleled commitment to serve these unique rural areas. It is out of love for the State and a lifelong pledge to serve these rural areas that has allowed rural Upstate New York to benefit from the ingenuity, creativity, and growth of our independent rural phone companies.

It is important to note that ION has a history of neutral partnering, "competition", cooperating with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (Cable TV Companies, RLEC's, Wireless/Cellular providers, CLEC's, and private/public entities such as Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), CBN Connect, Southern Tier West, and Southern Tier East).

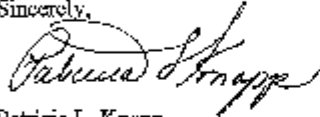
As we look at Broadband Services in New York State, ION has become the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and we believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also

gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

The ION network has already had a deep reaching impact on the upstate New York economy, has proven its solvency and sustainability, and has had a direct impact on Broadband connectivity and job creation in rural New York. It is now time to support the enhancement of the ION network to close the gaps, provide further redundancy and affordability, and develop additional unserved and underserved areas in New York.

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia L. Knapp". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Patricia L. Knapp



PAETEC

August 5, 2009

VIA US MAIL

NTIA
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express PAETEC Communications, Inc.'s ("PAETEC") full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the owner of New York State's largest fiber optic backbone network.

As a telecommunications and information services provider serving a large part of New York itself, PAETEC uses ION to build and provide a portion of the necessary infrastructure that our business needs now and in the future. ION provides PAETEC with cost effective access to enter and compete in the market to provide broadband services throughout rural areas in New York. PAETEC believes ION is an essential part of the future of broadband in New York.

Rural communities in New York lack access to broadband services and that is making it hard for families and businesses to compete and succeed in these rural areas. ION has a history of neutral partnering or "cooperation." In other words, ION facilitates cooperation with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (e.g., Cable TV Companies, RLEC's, Wireless/Cellular providers, CLEC's, and private/public entities such as Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), CBN Connect, Southern Tier West, and Southern Tier East).

The ION network has already had a deep reaching impact on the upstate New York economy, has proven its solvency and sustainability, and has had a direct impact on broadband connectivity and job creation in rural New York. It is now time to support the enhancement of the ION network to close the gaps, provide further redundancy and affordability, and develop additional unserved and underserved areas in New York. Further development of ION also gives all broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new areas of service or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.



PAETEC

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,

JT Ambrosi
Vice President, Vendor Relations



Friday, July 10, 2009

NJIA
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

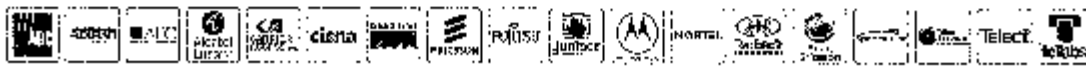
ION has used local technical and equipment companies and has invested in a huge amount of infrastructure in order to develop the network. This has helped support the local economy, retain and create jobs, and develop a much-needed broadband infrastructure in areas where there is little or no services available. ION has supported our company and continues to support us through their own development and growth.

As we look at Broadband Services in New York State, it is apparent that ION is the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and I believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,

Timothy Williams
President / CFO



Headquarters
1450 Old Country Road, Suite 100
Great Neck, NY 11040, USA
Phone: (516) 466-9100 • Fax: (516) 467-0457 • Toll Free: 1-888-295-2020



United Kingdom
15, Wood Lane, London W1B 4AA • United Kingdom • Barking Road
Tel: +44 (0)20 7252 2588 • Fax: +44 (0)20 7252 2589

CORNERSTONE

TELEPHONE COMPANY

2 THIRD STREET • SUITE 303 • TROY, NEW YORK 12180
518-272-7018 / 866-240-1312
Fax: 518-272-1847 / 800-608-2750

July 2, 2009

NTIA
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Sirs;

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.


As a retail service provider in New York State we are relying on ION to build and provide the necessary infrastructure that our business needs now and in the future. ION provides me with cost effective access to enter and compete in the market to provide broadband services throughout rural areas in New York. I believe ION is an essential part of the future of Broadband in New York State.

Rural communities in New York lack access to broadband services and that is making it hard for families and businesses to compete and succeed in these rural areas of New York. ION has a history of neutral partnering, "cooperation", cooperating with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (Cable TV Companies, RLEC's, Wireless/Cellular providers, CLLEC's, and private/public entities such as Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), CBN Connect, Southern Tier West, and Southern Tier East).

The ION network has already had a deep reaching impact on the upstate New York economy, has proven its solvency and sustainability, and has had a direct impact on Broadband connectivity and job creation in rural New York. It is now time to support the enhancement of the ION network to close the gaps, provide further redundancy and affordability, and develop additional unserved and underserved areas in New York. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new areas of service or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,





Mr. Joe Calzone
President & COO
ION
80 State Street, 7th Floor
Albany, NY 12207

August 12, 2009

Dear Mr. Calzone:

The purpose of this correspondence is to provide ION with a firm schedule of ADVA Optical Networking's (ADVA's) ability to supply Optical Transport products based upon the following project requirements:

- 42 FSP3000 Optical Transport Systems equipped with a single 2.5Gbit/s or 10Gbit/s channel

ADVA is capable of shipping all 42 systems within 4 to 6 weeks of purchase order receipt, provided that a forecast is issued by ION 4 weeks prior to placement of the purchase order.

ION can count on ADVA not only to deliver the above products in a timely fashion, but also as a financially stable, industry-proven, and operationally capable partner. ADVA has been in business since 1994, is publicly traded (XETRA: ADV.DE) and had 2008 revenues of \$320M. As of year end 2008, ADVA ranked #1 in the deployment of Intelligent Ethernet Access Devices and #4 in Metro Optical Systems, with over 200 carrier and 10,000 enterprise customers globally.

ADVA can provide turnkey E&I services, including fiber characterization, engineering, installation, system commissioning, and project management to ensure a quality and timely network deployment, and has extensive experience in this regard.

In addition, ADVA offers a variety of network planning and management tools, as well as post-warranty support options to ensure that the network is maintained over its lifetime.

ADVA looks forward to the opportunity to partner with ION to ensure the successful completion of this project.

ADVA Optical Networking
North America, Inc.
5755 Peachtree Industrial Blvd.
Norcross, Georgia 30092
USA
Phone: +1 678 725 8000
Fax: +1 770 263 0482

E-mail: info@advaoptical.com
www.advaoptics.com





August 18, 2009

Mr. Joe Calzone
President & COO
ION
80 State Street, 7th Floor
Albany, NY 12207

Dear Mr. Calzone:

Cisco is extremely pleased to be working with ION with regard to your Broadband Stimulus application. The purpose of this letter is to provide ION with a firm schedule of Cisco's ability to supply optical equipment based on the following project requirements:

- 74 ONS-5454 MSPP/MSTP transport platforms. Each system will be capable of aggregating traditional facilities including DS1, DS3, STS1, OC3, STM1, OC12, STM4, OC48, and STM64 along with data services, including 10BaseT, 100BaseT or Gigabit Ethernet or ATM service via OC3c, OC12c or OC48c interfaces, onto a single optical transport facility via OC48, OC48 DWDM and OC192 line interfaces.

Cisco is capable of shipping the required equipment in a timely fashion to support ION's project goals. In addition to this, Cisco can also offer a broad range of solutions to ensure a successful project.

Cisco Optical Solutions

The need for efficiency and profitability demands that service providers increase service velocity, density, variety, and capacity. The Cisco Optical portfolio of network solutions meets these requirements from the metro edge, through the metro core, to the long-haul network. As the next step in the evolution of IP+Optical networking, Cisco's Optical solutions can provide:

- Complete optical restoration, topology, and transmission support to maximize service velocity.
- Multiservice delivery to maximize service density.
- Edge support for all optical interfaces to maximize service variety.
- Transport that is scalable and efficient to maximize service capacity throughout the network.

Cisco Lifecycle Support

Cisco delivers services using a lifecycle approach that can help ION successfully meet its business goals. The unique Cisco Lifecycle Services approach defines the requisite activities at each phase of the network lifecycle, offering a services framework that is independent of who performs the service activities—Cisco, partners, or customers themselves—and enabling multiple parties to provide the support needed in a coordinated manner. Based on industry best practices and methodologies, Cisco Lifecycle Services align service and support activities with your unique business and technology requirements throughout the network lifecycle.

Project Management

Cisco can provide ION with project management support for all project-related activities.

Cisco Advisory Services

Cisco Advisory Services for Service Providers can help ION create new services that meet market requirements and can be rapidly deployed. Cisco brings global experience and expertise that can help ION speed time-to-market and increase profitability, while allowing you to focus on the execution of delivering the new service.

Should you have questions or need further clarification, please feel free to contact me at 703-484-0411.

Sincerely,

Michael Danoff
Major Account Manager – US Service Provider
Cisco Systems, Inc.

Zito Media

Next-generation Internet, Data, Voice Networks

611 Vade Hill Road, Coudersport, PA 16815

August 13, 2009

NTIA
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Sirs:

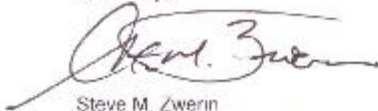
I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Broadband Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

Zito Media Communications, having the most extensive and expanding Optical fiber backbone in the Northern Tier of Pennsylvania believes that the interconnection of our two major networks would provide unprecedented rural expansion and telecommunication capabilities throughout this massive Interstate region. In concert with our own ARRA Broadband applications (1) Northern Pennsylvania Open Access Network and (2) the Central Pennsylvania Fiber Ring Project, the combined backbones would provide rural New York and Northern Pennsylvania with much needed next-generation Broadband services for cross-border business and institutional needs.

As a major service provider in Northern Pennsylvania we are relying on ION to build and provide the necessary infrastructure that many of our northern businesses need now and in the future. ION provides cost effective access to enter and compete in the market to provide broadband services throughout rural areas in New York. I believe ION is an essential part of the future of Broadband in New York State and for those business in northern Pennsylvania that rely heavily on products and services in New York State.

ION has a history of neutral partnering, "coopetition", cooperating with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (Cable TV Companies, RLEC's, Wireless/Cellular providers, CLEC's, and private/public entities such as Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), CBN Connect, Southern Tier West, and Southern Tier East). Through our interconnections, both companies would be able to provide advanced competitive products and services for our customers. We are excited at this interconnection opportunity.

Sincerely,



Steve M. Zwerin
Vice President – Business Development
Zito Media Communications, LLC

National Telecommunications and Information Administration

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1 Page

Withheld in its entirety
pursuant to FOIA Exemption 4
(5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(4))



The North-Eastern Pennsylvania Telephone Company

720 Main Street, PO Box D, Forest City, PA 18421

Phone: 570-785-3131

Fax: 570-785-9299

Email: www.nep.net

August 7, 2009

NTIA
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the New York state fiber optic backbone network that also reaches into North Eastern Pennsylvania.

The Rural Telephone Companies in Pennsylvania lack access to competitively priced, redundant backhaul services, which ION will help resolve. Out of pure need, and developed on rural independent infrastructure, the concept of ION came to fruition. As you know, it has always been difficult to make a business model work for broadband services in the rural communities of Pennsylvania and New York, but each and every ION partner company and rural telephone company has done it for over 100 years. What better group to run a mostly rural statewide fiber network than the businesses that have been committed to and doing business in rural communities for their entire business lives? This rural telephone company foundation is the strength of ION, as we bring the know-how to offer great customer service, reliable services, and an unparalleled commitment to serve these unique rural areas. It is out of love for our communities and a lifelong pledge to serve these rural areas that has allowed rural the areas of Pennsylvania and New York to benefit from the ingenuity, creativity, and growth of our independent rural phone companies.

It is important to note that ION has a history of neutral partnering, "cooperation", cooperating with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (Cable TV Companies, RLEC's, Wireless/Cellular providers, CLEC's, and private/public entities such as Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), CBN Connect, Southern Tier West, and Southern Tier East).

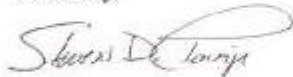
A large, stylized, italicized version of the letters "NEP" in a bold, black, serif font, positioned at the bottom of the page.

As we look at Broadband Services in North Eastern Pennsylvania and New York State, ION has become or will become the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and we believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State and our communities. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in Pennsylvania and New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

The ION network has already had a deep reaching impact on the rural economy, has proven its solvency and sustainability, and has had a direct impact on Broadband connectivity and job creation in rural Pennsylvania and New York. It is now time to support the enhancement of the ION network to close the gaps, provide further redundancy and affordability, and develop additional unserved and underserved areas in Pennsylvania and New York.

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband throughout Pennsylvania and New York.

Sincerely,



Steven D. Tourje
President

Crown Point Telephone Corporation
2829 NYS Rte 9N, P.O. Box 275
Crown Point, NY 12928
Phone (518) 597-3300 Fax (518) 597-3000

Monday, July 06, 2009

N11A
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

The Rural Telephone Companies in New York lacked access to competitively priced, redundant backhaul services until ION was born. Out of pure need, and developed on rural independent infrastructure, the concept of ION came to fruition. As you know, it has always been difficult to make a business model work for broadband services in rural Upstate New York, but each and every ION partner company has done it for over 100 years individually and over 1200 years combined. What better group to run a mostly rural statewide fiber network than the businesses that have been committed to and doing business in rural communities for their entire business lives? This rural telephone company foundation is the strength of ION, as we bring the know-how to offer great customer service, reliable services, and an unparalleled commitment to serve these unique rural areas. It is out of love for the State and a lifelong pledge to serve these rural areas that has allowed rural Upstate New York to benefit from the ingenuity, creativity, and growth of our independent rural phone companies.

It is important to note that ION has a history of neutral partnering, "coopetition", cooperating with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (Cable TV Companies, RLEC's, Wireline/Cellular providers, CLEC's, and private/public entities such as Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), CBN Connect, Southern Tier West, and Southern Tier East).

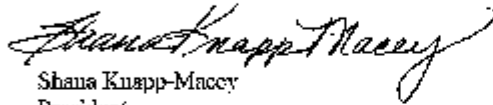
As we look at Broadband Services in New York State, ION has become the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and we believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also

gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

The ION network has already had a deep reaching impact on the upstate New York economy, has proven its solvency and sustainability, and has had a direct impact on Broadband connectivity and job creation in rural New York. It is now time to support the enhancement of the ION network to close the gaps, provide further redundancy and affordability, and develop additional unserved and underserved areas in New York.

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shana Knapp-Macey". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Shana Knapp-Macey
President



Germantown Telephone Company Inc.
P.O. Box 188 210 Main Street Germantown, NY 12526
tel. free 877-537-6255 local 518-537-6253
fax 518-537-6700 web www.gtownrnl.com

Thursday, July 09, 2009

NITLA
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

The Rural Telephone Companies in New York lacked access to competitively priced, redundant backhaul services until ION was born. Out of pure need, and developed on rural independent infrastructure, the concept of ION came to fruition. As you know, it has always been difficult to make a business model work for broadband services in rural Upstate New York, but each and every ION partner company has done it for over 100 years individually and over 1200 years combined. What better group to run a mostly rural statewide fiber network than the businesses that have been committed to and doing business in rural communities for their entire business lives? This rural telephone company foundation is the strength of ION, as we bring the know-how to offer great customer service, reliable services, and an unparalleled commitment to serve these unique rural areas. It is out of love for the State and a lifelong pledge to serve these rural areas that has allowed rural Upstate New York to benefit from the ingenuity, creativity, and growth of our independent rural phone companies.

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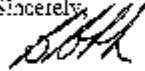
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Sincerely,



Bruce C. Bohussek
President



TELEPHONE • LONG DISTANCE • INTERNET • CABLE TV

Thursday, July 09, 2009

NIIA
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

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As we look at Broadband Services in New York State, ION has become the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and we believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

The Margaretville Telephone Company "Your Communications Partner"
P.O. Box 260, 50 Swart Street, Margaretville, New York 12455 (845) 586-3311 Fax (845) 586-4050 mtc@catskill.net


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Sincerely,



Glen Faulkner
General Manager
Margaretville Telephone Co.



NEWPORT TELEPHONE COMPANY INC.

July 8, 2009

NTIA
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

The Rural Telephone Companies in New York lacked access to competitively priced, redundant backhaul services until ION was born. Out of pure need, and developed on rural independent infrastructure, the concept of ION came to fruition. As you know, it has always been difficult to make a business model work for broadband services in rural Upstate New York, but each and every ION partner company has done it for over 100 years individually and over 1200 years combined. What better group to run a mostly rural statewide fiber network than the businesses that have been committed to and doing business in rural communities for their entire business lives? This rural telephone company foundation is the strength of ION, as we bring the know-how to offer great customer service, reliable services, and an unparalleled commitment to serve these unique rural areas. It is out of love for the State and a lifelong pledge to serve these rural areas that has allowed rural Upstate New York to benefit from the ingenuity, creativity, and growth of our independent rural phone companies.

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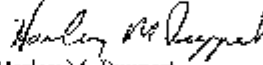
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NTIA
July 8, 2009
Page 2

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Sincerely,



Harley M. Ruppert
President



**The
Middleburgh
Telephone
Company**
ESTABLISHED
MIDDLEBURGH 1917

Monday, July 06, 2009

NTIA
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

The Rural Telephone Companies in New York lacked access to competitively priced, redundant backbone services until ION was born. Out of pure need, and developed on rural independent infrastructure, the concept of ION came to fruition. As you know, it has always been difficult to make a business model work for broadband services in rural Upstate New York, but each and every ION partner company has done it for over 100 years individually and over 1200 years combined. What better group to run a mostly rural statewide fiber network than the businesses that have been committed to and doing business in rural communities for their entire business lives? This rural telephone company foundation is the strength of ION, as we bring the know-how to offer great customer service, reliable services, and an unparalleled commitment to serve these unique rural areas. It is out of love for the State and a lifelong pledge to serve these rural areas that has allowed rural Upstate New York to benefit from the ingenuity, creativity, and growth of our independent rural phone companies.

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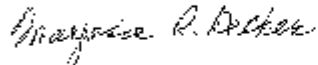
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Sincerely,



Marjorie R. Becker
President and General Manager
The Middleburgh Telephone Company



ARMSTRONG®

S A Y H E L L O T O T H E F U T U R E .

Wednesday, July 08, 2009

NTIA
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20236

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

The Rural Telephone Companies in New York lacked access to competitively priced, redundant backhaul services until ION was born. Out of pure need, and developed on rural independent infrastructure, the concept of ION came to fruition. As you know, it has always been difficult to make a business model work for broadband services in rural Upstate New York, but each and every ION partner company has done it for over 100 years individually and over 1200 years combined. What better group to run a mostly rural statewide fiber network than the businesses that have been committed to and doing business in rural communities for their entire business lives? This rural telephone company foundation is the strength of ION, as we bring the know-how to offer great customer service, reliable services, and an unparalleled commitment to serve these unique rural areas. It is out of love for the State and a lifelong pledge to serve these rural areas that has allowed rural Upstate New York to benefit from the ingenuity, creativity, and growth of our independent rural phone companies.

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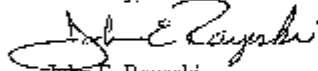
ARMSTRONG TELEPHONE COMPANY
135 FRONT STREET • ADDISON, NY 14801
607-359-2211 • FAX 607-359-2219
armstrongtelephone.com

As we look at Broadband Services in New York State, ION has become the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and we believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

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Sincerely,



John E. Rayeski
General Manager



Monday, July 06, 2009

NTIA
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

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www.chazyandwestport.com

2 Champlain Ave.
P.O. Box 249
Westport, New York 12995
Tel 518.962.5211
Tel. Free 1.888.298.5240
Fax 518.962.4511

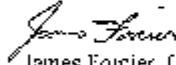
ESTABLISHED 1905

As we look at Broadband Services in New York State, ION has become the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and we believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CRN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

The ION network has already had a deep reaching impact on the upstate New York economy, has proven its security and sustainability, and has had a direct impact on Broadband connectivity and job creation in rural New York. It is now time to support the enhancement of the ION network to close the gaps, provide further redundancy and affordability, and develop additional unserved and underserved areas in New York.

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,



James Forcier, CEO
Chazy & Westport Telephone Corp.



34 Main Street, P.O. Box 349
Prattsburgh, NY 14873

p: 607-522-3712

f: 607-522-4228

Tuesday, July 07, 2009

NTIA
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

The Rural Telephone Companies in New York lacked access to competitively priced, redundant backhaul services until ION was born. Out of pure need, and developed on rural independent infrastructure, the concept of ION came to fruition. As you know, it has always been difficult to make a business model work for broadband services in rural Upstate New York, but each and every ION partner company has done it for over 100 years individually and over 1200 years combined. What better group to run a mostly rural statewide fiber network than the businesses that have been committed to and doing business in rural communities for their entire business lives? This rural telephone company foundation is the strength of ION, as we bring the know-how to offer great customer service, reliable services, and an unparalleled commitment to serve these unique rural areas. It is out of love for the State and a lifelong pledge to serve these rural areas that has allowed rural Upstate New York to benefit from the ingenuity, creativity, and growth of our independent rural phone companies.

It is important to note that ION has a history of neutral partnering, "coopetition", cooperating with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (Cable TV Companies, RLEC's, Wireless/Cellular providers, CLEC's, and private/public entities such as Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), CBN Connect, Southern Tier West, and Southern Tier East).

As we look at Broadband Services in New York State, ION has become the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and we believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

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ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,



Brian Ketchum
Vice President



N. 1A
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

The Rural Telephone Companies in New York lacked access to competitively priced, redundant backhaul services until ION was born. Out of pure need, and developed on rural independent infrastructure, the concept of ION came to fruition. As you know, it has always been difficult to make a business model work for broadband services in rural Upstate New York, but each and every ION partner company has done it for over 100 years individually and over 1200 years combined. What better group to run a mostly rural statewide fiber network than the businesses that have been committed to and doing business in rural communities for their entire business lives? This rural telephone company foundation is the strength of ION, as we bring the know-how to offer great customer service, reliable services, and an unparalleled commitment to serve these unique rural areas. It is out of love for the State and a lifelong pledge to serve these rural areas that has allowed rural Upstate New York to benefit from the ingenuity, creativity, and growth of our independent rural phone companies.

It is important to note that ION has a history of neutral partnering, "cooperation", cooperating with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (Cable TV Companies, RLEC's, Wireless/Cellular providers, CLEC's, and private/public entities such as Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), CBN Connect, Southern Tier West, and Southern Tier East).

As we look at Broadband Services in New York State, ION has become the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and we believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental,

Dialin & Pre-Paid Telephone Co. • CrossEdge Telephone Corp. • Comcast, Inc. • 1-800-451-1111 • Priority One • D- Security • U-1 Select One • 3-1 Wireless • Verizon W

10 Temple Street • PO Box 209
Fredonia, NY 14063
716-673-3031

www.dftcommunications.com
1-877-653-3100

332 Havana Avenue
Jonestown, NY 14021
716-453-8000



ONEIDA COUNTY RURAL TELEPHONE CO.
EST. 1905

96.60 MAIN STREET
HOLLAND PATENT, NY 13854

TEL (315) 835-5201
FAX (315) 385-5211

Friday, July 10, 2009

NITA
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20330

Dear Sirs;

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

ION has used local construction companies and has invested in a huge amount of infrastructure and technical components to develop their network. This has helped support the local economy, retain and create jobs, and develop a much-needed broadband infrastructure in areas where there is little or no services available. ION has supported our company and continues to support us through their own development and growth.

As we look at Broadband Services in New York State, it is apparent that ION is the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and I believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not-for-profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Ellis
Vice President



August 7, 2009

NTIA
Broadband Technology Opportunities Program
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York State fiber optic backbone network.

ION has helped service providers to open and expand broadband services through New York State, Pennsylvania and Vermont. ION has invested greatly in its infrastructure in order to develop its network across the geography. This has helped support the local economy, retain and create jobs, and develop a much-needed broadband infrastructure in areas where there is little or no services available. ION has supported our company and continues to support us through their own development and growth.

ION is a principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and I believe that expansion of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is necessary in helping to foster economic prosperity in the states of New York, Pennsylvania and Vermont. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANU (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas. This is especially true for Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom as ION expands its services into Vermont.

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband. I am proud to endorse ION's efforts.

Sincerely,

Roger Nishi
Vice-President, Industry Relations

P.O. Box 8
WAITSFIELD, VERMONT 05672-0008
TELEPHONE 802 495-0351
OR 1-800-456-3331
FAX 802-496 7040



Communications
Public Safety Building
172 Co Highway 33W
Cooperstown, New York 13326
Phone: (607) 547-5351
Fax: (607) 547-7529

August 10, 2009

Jim Becker

Independent Operators Network
80 State Street
Suite 700
Albany, New York 12207

Dear Jim,

Having the opportunity to attend your presentation in Binghamton a few months ago I understand your project and support your application for your grant to provide access to unserved and underserved areas through many of the counties in upstate New York including through Otsego County. Every day we see an increased need for access to high speed reliable broadband at an affordable and reasonable cost.

Otsego County is also applying for stimulus funding to provide access to un-served and underserved areas of the county where your build may not cover. Our project could close gaps and provide a backfill to a proposed new Public Safety Communications system and provide a network for interoperable communications.

I am excited about the large fiber network you have already and this tremendous potential for what this build could accomplish for New York state especially where economic growth and educational opportunities are concerned.

Together our efforts could provide services to many rural locations.

If I can be of any further assistance please contact me at 607-547-7530.

Sincerely,

Roy Althiser Jr.
Otsego County E-911 Coordinator

Rural Utility Service

Letters of Support

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KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND
NEW YORK
SENATOR

LEGISLATIVE STAFF OFFICE
DATE: 08/06/09
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205
202-224-4451

COMMITTEES
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
PUBLIC RELATIONS
INFRASTRUCTURE
SPECIAL COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

August 6, 2009

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Honorable Vilsack:

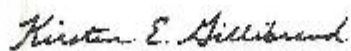
I write in support of ION Holden LLC's application for funding assistance from the United States Department of Agriculture through the Rural Utilities Service's broadband funding program. These funds will go towards ION's ongoing project to install broadband infrastructure throughout rural communities in New York.

Too many rural communities in New York still lack access to broadband services, making it difficult for families and businesses to compete and succeed in an economy dependent on high-speed telecommunications. ION has a strong track record of partnering and cooperating with carriers and competitors by establishing relationships with network providers, such as cable TV companies and wireless/cellular providers, in order to deploy broadband infrastructure in underserved areas.

ION has become the principal carrier of rural broadband traffic in much of Upstate New York, and further development of ION's broadband fiber optic network will connect additional communities that currently lack access to high-speed services. With further development of the ION network, regional carriers, non-profit community networks such as CHN Connect, the Development Authority of the North Country, Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to combine efforts in close the gaps in the State's broadband network. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new services and improve their current services, especially in the rural areas.

I ask that you please give this application your full consideration. If you have any questions, or desire further information, please do not hesitate to contact my staff member Jon Cardinal at (202) 224-4451.

Sincerely yours,



Kirsten E. Gillibrand

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

July 24, 2009

Thomas P Jensen
Broadband Initiatives Program
Rural Utilities Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Stop 1599
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Jensen:

I am taking this opportunity to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

Rural communities in New York lack access to broadband services and that is making it hard for families and businesses to compete and succeed in these rural areas New York. ION has a history of neutral partnering, cooperating with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (Cable TV Companies, RLECs, Wireless/Cellular providers, CLECs, and private/public entities such as Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), CBN Connect, Southern Tier West, and Southern Tier East).

As I look at Broadband Services in the 20th Congressional District and New York State, it is apparent that ION has become one of the principal carriers of rural Broadband traffic, and I believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network would be extremely helpful to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas of Upstate New York.

The ION network has had a deep reaching impact on the Upstate New York economy, has proven its solvency and sustainability, and has had a direct impact on Broadband connectivity and job creation in rural New York. It is now time to support the enhancement of the ION network to close the gaps, provide further redundancy and affordability, and develop additional unserved and underserved areas in New York.

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband to rural communities. Please know, that I certainly appreciate your positive consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Murphy". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Scott Murphy
20th Congressional District

CLERK OF THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY, N.Y.

418 MAIN STREET
ALBANY, N.Y. 12242-1100
PHONE 518/487-2274

SENATOR JAMES L. SEWARD'S OFFICE

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



JAMES L. SEWARD
SENATOR, 1ST DISTRICT

July 14, 2009

SENATOR JAMES L. SEWARD
SENATE SOURCE COMMITTEE

ATTORNEY GENERAL
REPUBLICAN CONFERENCE

COMMITTEES
SOUTH
HEALTH
EDUCATION
HIGHER EDUCATION
ACADEMICS

Broadband Initiatives Program
Rural UP-TICS Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Stop 1599
Washington, DC 20250

RE: ION Broadband
ARRA Proposal

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

Rural communities in New York lack access to broadband services and that is making it hard for families and businesses to compete and succeed in these areas. ION has a history of partnering with all carriers and competitors in a neutral manner, and has established relationships with a wide range of network providers.

As I look at broadband services in New York state, it is apparent that ION has become the principal carrier of rural broadband traffic, and I believe that further development of ION's broadband fiber optic network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the state. Further development of ION also gives all broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

The ION network has had a deep reaching impact on the upstate New York economy, has proved its solvency and sustainability, and has had a direct impact on broadband connectivity and job creation in rural New York. It is now time to support the enhancement of the ION network to close the gaps, provide further redundancy and affordability, and develop additional unserved and underserved areas in New York.

I would appreciate any consideration you may give to ION, and the grant application. If you need any additional information, please contact me at any time.

With best wishes, I remain

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James L. Seward".

JAMES L. SEWARD
State Senator

JLS:ljt
Cc: Krystine Hiller



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

WALTER D. OTTE
Assembly Member at Large
District 10
One Kings County Hall, Baiting,
Queens, County of Queens and
Other Counties

SENATOR
Committee on Agriculture and Forestry
Committee on Energy, Environment and Conservation
Committee on Health, Safety and Code Enforcement

COMMITTEE
Finance and Insurance
Governmental Employees

August 5, 2009

Thomas Jensen
Massachusetts State Office
USDA, Rural Development
451 West Street, Suite 2
Amherst, MA 01002

Dear Mr. Jensen,

This letter is provided to offer my enthusiastic support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, New York's largest fiber optic backbone network.

Access to broadband services remains a critical priority for communities across New York, particularly our rural communities, as businesses, governmental institutions and educational facilities seek to be contributing members to the state economy. Much like the revolution caused by the availability of electricity to our homes and businesses in the early 1900's, broadband access offers the opportunity to transform how we live and work in an increasingly competitive and global society. While the New York State Legislature and the Governor have acknowledged the importance of supporting investment in critical infrastructure, state funding for such purposes has been woefully inadequate to date, with only \$5 million allocated statewide for broadband development in the previous fiscal year. The influx of federal funds through ARRA offers real opportunity to make the strategic changes needed to move our society forward.

In respect to ION's application, it is my belief that the company has a history of neutral partnering with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader by establishing relationships with all types of network providers including cable companies, RLECs, wireless/cellular providers, CLECs, and private/public entities such as the Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), CBN Connect, Southern Tier West, Regional Planning and Development Board, and its counterpart, Southern Tier East.

I believe that the enhancement of ION's Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, regional carriers, quasi-governmental, and not-for-profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION will also give all broadband carriers in New York the ability



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

PETER D. LOPEZ
Assemblyman, 127th District
Catskill, Sullivan, Delaware,
Greene, Otsego, Schoharie and
Ulster Counties

TRAINING MINORITY MEYFER
Governor's Advisory Task Force on
Food, Farm and Rural Policy Task Force

COMMITTEES
Environment, Conservation
Governmental Finance

to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in rural New York, which, by state definition, is home to over 2.5 million residents- a population larger than roughly half the states in the nation.

Continued expansion of the ION Network will have a deep reaching impact on the upstate New York economy while promoting broadband connectivity and job creation in rural New York. It is my firm belief that timely public investment in the ION network will offer greater opportunity to the families, farms and businesses in New York State, and I strongly urge you to award their grant request.

Sincerely,

Peter D. Lopez
Assemblyman, 127th District

Rural Utility Service

Letters of Support

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Southern Tier East Regional Planning Development Board

575 State Street • Binghamton, NY 13901 • Phone: (607) 724-1327

Fax: (607) 724-1194 • E-mail: ste@sterny.org • www.sterny.org

Robert Augenstern, Director Richard E. McCormick, Deputy Director

August 3, 2009

Jim Becker
Independent Operators Network
30 State Street
Suite 700
Albany, NY 12207

SUBJECT: SUPPORT OF ARRA APPLICATION

Dear Jim,

I am pleased to write in strong support of the application of the Independent Optical Network (ION) for funding under the ARRA stimulus bill.

For the past two decades, as an Appalachian Local Development District, we have promoted and funded projects which have: promoted e-government through coordination of training of county IT personnel; involved E-911 emergency services coordinators; underwritten the extension of telemedicine to provide services to rural areas; and supported the educational sector through distance learning projects. Recently we completed our 2009 update to our regional telecommunications plan.

The Southern Tier East portion of the ION proposal will further the high speed broadband accessibility of rural areas in the northern part of our region and the proposed open access structure directly furthers the private sector implementation of parts of our plan. In the event that the ION proposal is funded and implemented, it is our intent to build upon the ION open access back bone to extend high speed telecommunications access to additional critical telecommunication users within our region.

The private sector involvement represented by the ION application will have the dual benefit to our region of helping to preserve the existing small, mostly rural independent telephone companies, while extending the accessibility of our rural areas to an optical fiber network which will support commercial and community interests. Access to a fiber optic network will also play a critical role in the future economic development of this area as well as preserving many existing jobs.

In conclusion, may I urge that this ION application be funded, and indicate our willingness to be involved in as the ION Network evolves.

Sincerely,

Robert Augenstern, Director

cc: Kyrste Hiten
Joe Calzons at 515 563 4580.



Southern Tier West

Regional Planning & Development Board

James Cooper, Chairman

Donald R. Rychnowski, Executive Director

August 6, 2009

Joe Calzone
ION Corporation
80 State Street, 7th Floor,
Albany, NY 12207

Dear Mr. Calzone:

As a regional planning board located in the southern tier of New York State we have continually looked a means to provide increased bandwidth at an affordable price to the entities across our service area. After discussions with representatives of ION Corporation I fully support a project that would provide additional fiber infrastructure between Falconer and Whitesville, NY. As I understand this project it would provide not only redundancy for our region of Chautauqua, Cattaraugus and Allegany Counties but it will also provide an alternative to the current broadband providers.

This project will provide a means for our areas business not only to remain in southwestern New York but also to expand their capabilities. This project addresses our need for redundancy, at an affordable cost, that our businesses require to move forward with new projects and new investments.

We view this as a necessary project not only for our business but also for global competitiveness of the companies within this region. This fiber build will remove a barrier that has affected this regions ability to compete on a level playing field with other parts of the country. We feel that the creation of this redundant network within the southern tier west region will directly and immediately benefit educational institutions, healthcare systems, private and public entities as well as the residents with greater services being available to them.

We fully support this very important project, which will provide enhanced broadband connectivity across rural New York State.

Sincerely,

Donald R. Rychnowski
Executive Director

Southern Tier Central Regional Planning & Development Board



8 Denison Parkway East
Suite 310
Corning, NY 14830

Tel: 607/962-5092
Fax: 607/962-3400
www.stcplanning.org
E-mail: stcrpdb@stnyrr.com

Marcia D. Weber
Executive Director

August 6, 2009

Broadband Initiatives Program
Rural Utilities Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Stop 1599
Washington, DC 20250

To the Review Committee:

Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board (STC) is strongly supportive of the ION application for funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

STC has been working since the 1980s to increase broadband service to our three counties of Chemung, Schuyler, and Steuben. In 2006, we completed a regional telecommunications study that outlined our telecommunications assets, gaps, and needs. This study has been updated over the past few months.

Through focus groups and other discussions, we have determined that our businesses, including agri-business, technology firms, and health care, are unable to develop fully because of the lack of broadband services as well as redundancy and diversity. The businesses could be expanded to provide more income and jobs (which are desperately needed in Upstate NY) if they had better access to these services. We are also in danger of losing existing businesses and being unable to attract new business with access that is insufficient for their needs.

Our education system has made tremendous progress in distance learning but requires increased broadband services to fully implement their plans and to reach the rural schools. Our libraries cannot now access the affordable high speed bandwidth that will bring needed training, government services, and knowledge to our rural region.

Local governments are trying to provide adequate services and contain costs, and they need increased bandwidth to do so. We have worked closely with their IT departments and their emergency services departments to determine their needs and possible solutions, and they, too, must develop increased bandwidth.

70% of our land area, the area outside of the major population areas, is not covered by either cable or DSL. The population living in that area is understandably frustrated by not having

[Serving Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben Counties](#)



Public Safety Wireless Building • 317 Washington Street, Suite 414 • Watertown, New York 13601 • Telephone: (315) 735-2393 • Fax: (315) 735-2397 • TDD: (315) 735-2390

Water and Wastewater Facilities
Watershed Pump Station
23557 NYS Route 37
Watertown, New York 13601

Telephone: (315) 735-2343
Telex: (315) 735-2397
Emergency Telephone: (315) 735-4000

Open Access to Open Network
Public Safety Office Building
317 Washington Street, Suite 414
Watertown, New York 13601

Telephone: (315) 735-2333
Telex: (315) 735-2397
Emergency Telephone: (866) 569-3262

Solid Waste Management Facility
25-616 NYS Route 107
Watertown, New York 13602

Telephone: (315) 832-9254
Telex: (315) 235-5015

www.daa.ny.gov

July 22, 2009

Mr. Thomas P. Jensen
General Field Representative
United States Department of Agriculture - Rural Development
451 West Street, Suite 2
Amherst, MA 01002

Re: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal

Dear Mr. Jensen:

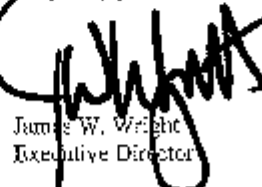
I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

As a wholesale service provider in New York State, we are relying on ION to build and provide the necessary infrastructure that our business needs now and in the future. ION enables us to cost effectively connect our customers in Northern New York to other locations throughout rural areas in New York. I believe ION is an essential part of the future of Broadband in New York State.

Rural communities in New York lack access to Broadband services and that is making it hard for families and businesses to compete and succeed in these rural areas of New York. ION has a history of neutral partnering, "competition" (cooperating with all carriers and competitors) and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (cable TV companies, RLEC's, wireless/cellular providers, CLEC's, and private/public entities such as our network, CBN Connect, Southern Tier West, and Southern Tier East).

The ION network has already had a deep, reaching impact on the upstate New York economy, has proven its solvency and sustainability, and has had a direct impact on Broadband connectivity and job creation in rural New York. It is now time to support the enhancement of the ION network to close the gaps, provide further redundancy and affordability, and develop additional unserved, and underserved, areas in New York. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new areas of service or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

Very truly yours,



James W. Wright
Executive Director

DMW:JWW/hma



Saturday, August 08, 2009

Rural Utility Service
Thomas P Jensen
USDA Rural Development
New England Region

Dear Mr. Jensen:

I am writing to express support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, a New York state fiber optic backbone network. My company is also a RUS BIP applicant, and we look forward to coordinating services with ION to share carrier traffic and provide redundancy.

ION has helped service providers to open and expand broadband services in many areas of New York State. ION has invested greatly in its infrastructure in order to develop their network. This has helped support the local economies, retain and create jobs, and develop a much-needed broadband infrastructure in areas where there is little or no service available. ION has supported our company and we look forward to working with them to see mutual development and growth of our networks.

ION, like CBN Connect, is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of broadband to a vast number of rural communities, and helps drive economic growth inside these communities by enhancing services and making broadband more affordable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Howard Lowe". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Howard Lowe
President



SEAN FISCHER
COMMISSIONER

STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
THE HARRIMAN STATE CAMPUS - BUILDING 2
1220 WASHINGTON AVENUE
ALBANY, N.Y. 12210-2000

RICHARD D. ROY
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

August 17, 2009

Rural Utility Service
Thomas P. Jensen
USDA Rural Development
New England Region

Dear Mr. Jensen:

I am writing to express my support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION & DANC, New York State fiber optic backbone network providers.

ION & DANC are interested in assisting governmental agencies and service providers to open and expand Broadband services through New York State. ION & DANC have invested in their infrastructure in order to develop a network across the state. This has helped to develop a much-needed Broadband infrastructure in areas where there is little or no services available.

With further development of the state's Broadband service community, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION & DANC also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

Projects of this nature have the potential to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities, which is where most of the Department of Correctional Services' facilities are located. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Herzog
Assistant Commissioner
Chief Information Officer

Cc: Commissioner Fischer
Deputy Commissioner Roy



State of New York
David A. Paterson
Governor



Office of Mental Health
44 Holland Avenue
Albany, New York 12228
www.omh.state.ny.us

August 14, 2009

Ms. Anna M. Gomez
Acting Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
HCHB, Room 4812
Washington, DC 20230

**RE: Letter of Support for Development Authority of the North Country (DANC)
Network Growth and Adirondack Connect as Broadband Technology
Opportunities Programs**

Ms. Gomez:

I am writing to express our support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by the Development Authority of the North Country (DANC). If selected for funding, DANC Network Growth and Adirondack Connect will extend New York State's fiber optic network to multiple rural counties and extend a far reaching open access broadband network.

DANC's projects cover a number of counties with the largest areas of un-served and underserved census blocks. The grant will help DANC create alternative open access network. It will help drive down the cost of broadband services in the rural counties and provide reliable alternatives to broadband service subscribers. These infrastructures, once in place, can help medical and healthcare providers and other community support organizations in advancing education, training, and healthcare delivery.

I am confident that broadband technology and the innovative use of optic fiber network can stimulate the local economic growth, and foster a sustainable broadband user community in many rural areas in New York State.

Sincerely,

Hep Wang, Ph.D.
Deputy Commissioner & Chief Information Officer



Rural Utility Service

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FRIENDSHIP EMPIRE ZONE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
TOWN OF FRIENDSHIP AND ALLEGANY COUNTY

Director
Wendell E Brown
wbrown@friendshipzone.org

2008
EZ Board

D. Clark

March 16, 2009

L. Collins

In regards to: Fiber build Project Support Letter

M. Doyle

Donald Rychnowski, Executive Director

K. Hills

Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board
4030 Route 219, Suite 200
Salamanca, NY 14779

D. Panton

Dear Mr. Rychnowski:

M. Halsebrock

K. L. Poye

The Friendship Empire Zone is located in Allegany County within the Southern Tier of New York State. This is a designation of four Empire Zone Contiguous Areas in need of economic development. These areas are located in Friendship, Airtie, Whitesville and Cuba, NY.

S. Myers

L. Suck

We are very interested in increased fiber optic bandwidth at an affordable price and support a project that would provide additional fiber infrastructure between Falconer and Whitesville, NY. This project addresses the need for redundancy, which businesses require to move forward with new projects. It would also provide an alternative for broadband requirements at an affordable cost, strengthening business models and allowing local businesses to compete with companies in larger metropolitan areas. In addition, this network opens up opportunities to expand business and retain New York based jobs in the future.

R. Stark

R. Taus

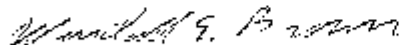
W. Zacher

As a result of this new network, we estimate that over the next 3 years, that the 96 Empire Zone Certified Businesses in these Zone areas will employ 100 new jobs and retain their 2,982 current employees. In addition, these Empire Zone Certified Businesses in these Zone areas will make estimated investment of \$20 million in machinery, equipment, and capital as a result.

We view this as a necessary project not only for these Empire Zone Certified Businesses but also for global competitiveness of the companies within the region. This fiber build will remove a barrier that has prevented this rural region from competing on a level playing field with other parts of the country. The creation of this redundant network within the Southern Tier West region will directly and immediately benefit those manufacturing and commercial businesses. This redundant network will also benefit educational institutions, healthcare systems, and private and public entities as well as the residents by making greater services available to them.

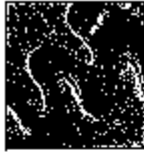
We support this very important project, which will directly provide enhanced broadband connectivity across rural New York State.

Sincerely,



Wendell E. Brown
Director Friendship Empire Zone

8001 STATE ROUTE 19N SUITE 170
JELMCOTT NEW YORK 14615
TEL 866-889-9096 FAX 866-256-8028
www.friendshipzone.org



**STEBEN COUNTY
INDUSTRIAL
DEVELOPMENT
AGENCY**

*Driving the Wheels
of Change*

July 7, 2009

NTIA
1401 Constitution Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Sirs;

I am writing to express the Steuben County IDA's full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

The Rural Telephone Companies in New York lacked access to competitively priced, redundant backhaul services until ION was born. Out of pure need, and developed on rural independent infrastructure, the concept of ION came to fruition. As you know, it has always been difficult to make a business model work for broadband services in rural Upstate New York, but each and every ION partner company has done it for over 100 years individually and over 1200 years combined. What better group to run a mostly rural statewide fiber network than the businesses that have been committed to and doing business in rural communities for their entire business lives? This rural telephone company foundation is the strength of ION, as we bring the know-how to offer great customer service, reliable services, and an unparalleled commitment to serve these unique rural areas. It is out of love for the State and a lifelong pledge to serve those rural areas that has allowed rural Upstate New York to benefit from the ingenuity, creativity, and growth of our independent rural phone companies.

It is important to note that ION has a history of neutral partnering, "cooperation", cooperating with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (Cable TV Companies, RLEC's, Wireless/Cellular providers, CLEC's, and private/public entities such as Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), CBN Connect, Southern Tier West, and Southern Tier East).

As we look at Broadband Services in New York State, ION has become the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and we believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

The ION network has already had a deep reaching impact on the upstate New York economy, has proven its solvency and sustainability, and has had a direct impact on

7234 Route 54 North • PO Box 393 • Bath, NY 14810-0393 • Phone: 607-776-3316
Fax: 307-776-5039 • E-mail: Info@SteubenCountyIDA.com • Web: www.SteubenCountyIDA.com



Schoharie County
OFFICE OF CLERK, AUDITOR & PURCHASING AGENT

P.O. Box 429, County Office Building
Schoharie, NY 12157
Phone: (518) 295-8347 Fax: (518) 295-8482



Board of Supervisors, Chairman
Earl Van Wazer, III

Karen Miller, Clerk
Sheryl Longstreu, Deputy Clerk
Karen Hathaway, Deputy Clerk

May 19, 2009

Independent Optical Network
Attn: Jim Becker, CEO/President
80 State Street
7th Floor
Albany, NY 12207

Dear Mr. Becker,

I have enclosed for your information a copy of a resolution that was adopted at the Schoharie County Board of Supervisors meeting on May 15, 2009. If you have any questions regarding this resolution please feel free to contact this office.

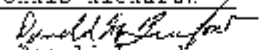
Sincerely,

Karen Hathaway, Deputy Clerk
Schoharie Co. Board of Supervisors

RESOLUTION NO. 56

TITLE: SUPPORTING THE EFFORT TO PROVIDE BROADBAND AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACCESS THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF NEW YORK

OFFERED BY:  Dennis Richards Who moved its adoption.

SECONDED BY:  Donald Brundow Chairman Rules & Legislation Committee

WHEREAS, broadband access includes critical carrier services, high speed Internet, television and voice services; and

WHEREAS, high speed Internet service is of major economic and social importance in today's world; and

WHEREAS, Schoharie County has a Telecommunications Task Force working toward improving broadband access; and

WHEREAS, the Telecommunications Task Force has conducted a public survey indicating strong support for broadband access throughout Schoharie County; and

WHEREAS, that study clearly shows that there are large portions of Schoharie County without broadband coverage; and

WHEREAS, development of self healing fiber rings as part of a crucial backbone network to connect homes, businesses, schools, government and health care services are important to delivering broadband to those users; and


WHEREAS, ION proposes the creation of technology agnostic, robust data backbone as a universal "on ramp" to the knowledge based economic mainstream and

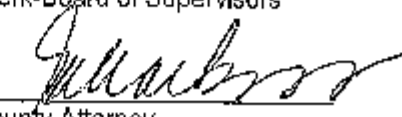
WHEREAS, this project is a critical network for high speed broadband service; now therefore be it hereby

RESOLVED, that the Schoharie County Board of Supervisors supports ION's efforts to provide the availability of broadband access throughout New York State.

Dated: May 14, 2009
Filed: May 14, 2009

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY.


Clerk-Board of Supervisors


County Attorney

STATE OF NEW YORK
COUNTY OF SCHOHARIE ss:



Office of the President

February 3, 2009

Donald Rychnowski, Executive Director
Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board
4039 Route 219, Suite 200
Salamanca, NY 14779

Dear Mr. Rychnowski:

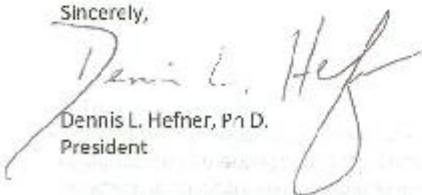
As the largest university in the western part of the New York's Southern Tier, SUNY Fredonia is very interested in and supportive of increased fiber optic bandwidth at an affordable price. Our campus fully supports the proposed project to provide additional fiber infrastructure between Falconer and Whitesville, NY. This project addresses the need for strategic redundancy and for critical connectivity. The project also provides an affordable alternative for broadband requirements, thus allowing local businesses to compete with companies in larger metropolitan areas with opportunities to expand business and retain New York-based jobs.

This new fiber path will enhance connectivity to SUNY Fredonia web-based services for current and prospective students and employees living in rural areas, broadening our outreach and online course offerings, and potentially increasing our student population base. The diverse routing provides fiber redundancy, allowing continuing academic and business procedures to take place in the event another fiber path is compromised.

We view this project as necessary not only for our university, but for global competitiveness of the companies within this region. This fiber project will remove a barrier that has prevented this region from competing on a level playing field with other parts of the country. The creation of this network within the Southern Tier West region will directly and immediately benefit educational institutions, healthcare systems, private and public entities, and individual citizens.

We fully support this very important project. Enhanced broadband connectivity across rural New York State is crucial for the future of our region.

Sincerely,



Dennis L. Hefner, Ph.D.
President

Office of the Provost
Saxon Drive
Alfred, NY 14802-1205
607-871-2137
Fax: 607-871-2339
www.alfred.edu

Alfred University

August 5, 2009

Donald Rychnowski, Executive Director
Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board
4039 Route 219, Suite 200
Salamanca, NY 14779

Dear Mr. Rychnowski:

As a business located in the Southern Tier of New York State we are very interested in increased fiber optic bandwidth at an affordable price and support a project that would provide additional fiber infrastructure between Falconer and Whitesville, NY. It would also provide an alternative for broadband requirements at an affordable cost, strengthening business models and allowing local businesses to compete with companies in larger metropolitan areas. In addition, this network opens up opportunities to expand business and retain New York based jobs in the future.

As a result of this new network, I/we estimate that over the next 3 years, we will employ three new jobs and retain our twenty-one current employees. In addition, our company estimates an investment of \$ 150,000 in machinery, equipment and capital as a result.

We are presently developing partnerships in Turkey, the United Kingdom, China and South Korea which will allow us to offer distance education to those regions of the world. Access to fiber is essential for us to be able to fulfill our mission in these locations. Alfred University must be able to compete internationally. For us to provide educational support in distant locations requires access to our international partners through the use of technology that depends on fiber.

We view this as a necessary project not only for our business but also for global competitiveness of the companies within this region. This fiber build will remove a barrier that has prevented this region from competing on a level playing field with other parts of the country. The creation of this redundant network within the Southern Tier West region will directly and immediately benefit educational institutions, healthcare systems, and private and public entities as well as the residents by making greater services available to them.

We support this very important project, which will directly provide enhanced broadband connectivity across rural New York State.

Sincerely,



William M. Hall, Ph.D.
Acting Provost
Alfred University



SUNY
Cobleskill

State University of New York • College of Agriculture and Technology • Cobleskill, New York 12043-1701 • 518-255-5011 • Fax 518-255-5333

August 11, 2009

Broadband Technology Opportunities Program
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
HCHB Room 4812
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230

Subject: Support for ION Broadband, ARRA Proposal

I am writing in full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act being submitted by ION.

As the provost of the State University of New York College of Agriculture and Technology at Cobleskill, a small agricultural college in a rural area of Upstate New York--and as president of the Schoharie County Chamber of Commerce-- I am daily made aware of the disadvantage to both education and business caused by the lack of wide access to broadband internet service here.

For our commuter students, this lack of broadband access often means they cannot participate fully in courses that have on-line components, nor may they be able to take summer school or intercession courses, which are primarily taught on-line. Added to this is poor access to library resources. If our students, K-16, are to be competitive, they must have access to and be comfortable with the latest technology.

Much of our business is agriculture, and lack of adequate access, or need to rely on expensive satellite access, places them at a disadvantage. Added to this, the county has been trying to bring more business and industry in, but without adequate internet access, many new firms look elsewhere; this greatly harms a poor county with one of the highest unemployment rates in the state.

Frankly, broadband access needs to be considered at the same level as access to electricity and telephone. This proposal being submitted by ION will mean that our young people will be more competitive in the world of tomorrow, and we as a County may get the shot in the arm we need to turn lives around.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Anne C. Myers'.

Anne C. Myers, Ph.D.
Provost



www.nysernet.org

385 Jordan Road, Troy, NY 12180
(518) 783 3984 fax (518) 783 3198

100 South Salina Street, Suite 100
Armen Building, Syracuse, NY 13210
(315) 413 0345 fax (315) 413 0146

NTIA
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Grant Administrators:

NYSErNet writes in strong support of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION and DANC, the largest New York State combined fiber optic backbone network. NYSErNet and some of its member institutions in the North Country have already derived enormous benefit from earlier builds. This proposed expansion would reach completely unserved areas, in the process giving greater redundancy through completing rings and reaching vital assets needing advanced infrastructure. ION and DANC are an essential part of the future of Broadband in New York State.

For twenty-four years, NYSErNet has provided the R&E backbone network in New York State. Our initial network was the first use of the Internet protocol outside of the US Defense Department. We currently run a DWDM optical backbone from New York City to Buffalo. NYSErNet also operates the primary R&E collocation facility in the northeast and one of the most important R&E peering points in the world, provides dark fiber for our members in New York City, runs a commercial-grade data center dedicated to our members' disaster recovery and business continuity needs, and is active at all levels in the national and international networking community.

With each of the many generations of network and network resources that NYSErNet has deployed we have, with our member institutions, pushed the envelope. Institutions located in New York City or near our PoPs in major upstate cities benefit immediately from robust access to our global peering point in Manhattan, business continuity center in Syracuse, or the scientific resources and supercomputers at institutions optically connected to our network. But institutions located at a distance face great challenges. As noted above, several in the North Country already reach our backbone robustly because of earlier DANC builds. This proposal will reach other critical facilities such as Griffiss Institute, serving Air Force Rome Labs and the many academic institutions in the inadequately served Utica/Rome area, connect spurs into rings, and in the process reach many areas that are underserved or totally unserved.

ION and DANC have a history of neutral partnering, "coopetition", cooperating with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (Cable TV Companies, RLEC's, Wireless/Cellular providers, CLEC's, and private/public entities). Particularly relevant

private/public entities). This history is particularly relevant here, as this proposal is part of a coordinated effort to also extend to the Southern Tier in a cooperative build by the Finger Lakes Technologies Group (FLTG) and the complementary Southern Tier West proposal. In aggregate these projects fundamentally alter the broadband map of New York State.

Previous DANC work in the Northern Tier and ION work there and in other parts of the State have demonstrated their solvency and sustainability. The DANC/ION proposal will reach critical national assets like the Griffiss Institute serving Rome Labs with its lead role on cybersecurity. It reaches anchor institutions in the Utica/Rome area and other parts of the North Country, and from these centers of excellence and engines of innovation will come the network enabled jobs. Complementing this, DANC will be the network provider for one of the FCC Rural Health Care awardees, providing transport for a host of medical institutions back to the NYSERNet PoP in Syracuse. NYSERNet and the NYSERNet community, anchor tenants on this infrastructure, will help sustain the innovations that create these jobs.

The DANC/ION proposal, and its counterpart in the Southern Tier, will bring advanced networking to vast new areas of New York. Expansion of the DANC/ION network is the kind of project that we all can and should support, as it goes far to make broadband available to a vast number of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, offers the ability to enhance services, and is a key component to providing affordable broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,



Dr. Timothy L. Lance
President and Board Chair, NYSERNet
Distinguished Service Professor, University at Albany



NEW YORK STATE TELECOMMUNICATIONS
ASSOCIATION, INC.
26 CORPORATE WOODS BOULEVARD
ALBANY, NY 12211
(518) 443-1700 • FAX: (518) 443-2810
www.nysta.org

August 10, 2009

Rural Utility Service
Thomas P Jensen
USDA RD GFR

Dear Mr. Jensen:

On behalf of the New York State Telecommunications Association's (NYSTA) local exchange carrier members, I am writing to express our full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, one of the largest New York state fiber optic backbone networks in the state. ION's proposal will provide a more redundant, reliable, and less costly network solution for use by both public and private carriers, and ultimately, the citizens and businesses of rural New York. Thus, the proposal will directly advance the goals of the Act by providing a more economic solution in meeting the broadband needs of both the unserved and underserved communities that the expanded network can, and will, serve.

ION was created by the rural local exchange carrier NYSTA members and their ISP subsidiaries in New York to provide access to competitively priced, redundant backhaul services. These rural providers have a rich history encompassing the last 100 years in successfully meeting the telecommunications needs of rural consumers and the proposal being submitted by ION will continue to help them meet this mission and will further advance the goals of bringing advanced, reliable Broadband service throughout some of the most rural areas of New York.

ION has become a principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and we believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, other carriers will be able to better accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives to both small and large customers as well as anchor institutions in some of the more rural areas of the state.

It is for the above reasons that we submit this letter of support regarding the ION proposal.

Sincerely,

Robert R. Pickett
President



GRIFFISS INSTITUTE

100 Griffiss Blvd.
Rome, NY 13243
Phone: 315.477.1100
Fax: 315.477.1101
www.griffissinstitute.org

August 10, 2009

NTIA
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Sirs:

We are writing to express our full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION and DANC, the largest New York State combined fiber optic backbone network.

The Griffiss Institute (GI) is a 501(c)3 Technology and Business Incubator located at the Griffiss Business and Technology Park in Rome, New York. The GI is charged with developing and expanding high technology employment opportunities in the Mohawk Valley by partnering with the Air Force Research Laboratory /Information Directorate (AFRL/RI), private industry and academia. In fact, AFRL/RI has the GI on contract to transfer the world class technology from AF research to industry for commercialization and productization. We are relying on ION and DANC to build and provide the necessary infrastructure that the Griffiss Institute needs now and in the future. The incubator service at the GI supports high technology business development specifically focused on Information Technology with an emphasis on Information Assurance, Computer Forensics and Computer Security. These technology thrusts are key to our nation's needs. Connectivity to the GI will allow world class researchers a real time technology development vehicle to collaborate over high speed networks. Plans are in place connect the networks to a High Performance (Terra Flop) processor in the GI enabling new advanced means of developing and transitioning technology. It will also provide a test bed for developing new products leading to new economic stimulus. ION and DANC provide cost effective broadband services throughout rural areas in New York. I believe ION and DANC are an essential part of the future of Broadband in New York State.

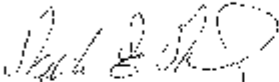
ION and DANC have a history of neutral partnering, "coopetition", cooperating with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (Cable TV Companies, RLEC's, Wireless/Cellular providers, CLEC's, and private/public entities such as CBN Connect, Southern Tier West, and Southern Tier East).

The ION and DANC open access networks have already had a deep reaching impact on the upstate New York economy, have proven its solvency and sustainability, and have had a direct impact on Broadband connectivity and job

creation in rural New York. It is now time to support the enhancement of these networks to close the gaps, provide further redundancy and affordability, and develop additional unserved and underserved areas in New York. Further development of ION and DANC's networks also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new areas of service or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

The expansion of the ION and DANC networks is the kind of project we can and should all support as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities and offers the ability to enhance services, provide affordable Broadband throughout New York and is a means for business stimulus via information research and development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William E. Wolf". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "W" and "E".

William E. Wolf, Director
Griffis Institute

Rural Utility Service

Letters of Support

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Together, we're Leading Businesses. Leading Communities.™

March 24, 2009

Donald Rychanowski, Executive Director
Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board
4039 Route 219, Suite 200
Salamanca, NY 14779

Dear Mr. Rychanowski:

We applaud and greatly appreciate the efforts of the Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board to increase fiber optic bandwidth in the Southern Tier. The Chautauqua County Chamber of Commerce and the Manufacturers Association of the Southern Tier represent over 1,300 businesses in the Southern Tier including 24,000 employees. Our members are very interested in increased fiber optic bandwidth at an affordable price and support a project that would provide additional fiber infrastructure between Falconer and Whitesville, NY. This project addresses the need for redundancy, which businesses require to move forward with new projects. It would also provide an alternative for broadband requirements at an affordable cost, strengthening business models and allowing local businesses to compete with companies in larger metropolitan areas. In addition, this network opens up opportunities to expand business and retain New York based jobs in the future.

We view this as a necessary project not only for our business but also for global competitiveness of the companies within this region. This fiber build will remove a barrier that has prevented this region from competing on a level playing field with other parts of the country. The creation of this redundant network within the Southern Tier West region will directly and immediately benefit educational institutions, healthcare systems, and private and public entities as well as the residents by making greater services available to them.

We support this very important project, which will directly provide enhanced broadband connectivity across rural New York State.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Todd J. Trantum', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Todd J. Trantum
President/CEO, Chautauqua County Chamber of Commerce
Executive Director, Manufacturers Association of the Southern Tier

Chautauqua County Chamber of Commerce / Manufacturers Association of the Southern Tier
Dunkirk Branch 10785 Bennett Road / Dunkirk, New York 14048 / 716-366-6200 / Fax 716-366-4276
Jamestown Branch 101 West Fifth Street / Jamestown, New York 14701 / 716-484-1101 / Fax 716-487-0785
MTI Branch 512 Falconer Street / Jamestown, New York 14701 / 716-483-1833 / Fax 716-487-9599
website: www.chautauquachamber.org / email: cccc@chautauquachamber.org



August 10, 2009

Broadband Initiatives Program
Rural Utilities Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Stop 1599
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

As a rural hospital system, including 5 hospitals and over 25 health centers, we are faced with many challenges in our goal to provide excellent and reliable care for the rural population. Adding to this challenge is the cost of and access to, dependable and redundant broadband services. We are always looking to see how we can reduce costs and be more efficient in all that we do without compromising our patient care or services, the ION model fits in with that goal, with their low cost services, redundant infrastructure and proven reliability.

For Bassett, the potential of having cost effective broadband, with large capacity and reliable redundancy is imperative to offering care throughout our vast network of hospital and health centers. Since we depend on broadband, to support the telemedicine attributes of our system, including the PACS system and electronic medical records as well as others, it becomes not only an issue of cost; it becomes an issue of patient care.

ION has been a supportive partner in looking to address the needs of the rural communities and especially the needs of healthcare. With a history of neutral partnering, cooperating with all carriers and competitors, ION has worked closely with providers that we currently use in an effort to enhance services of and locations that have ION's reliable fiber backbone.

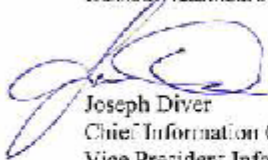
ION has become the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic through Rural New York, and I believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the viability of the rural areas throughout the State.

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,



Bertine C. McKenna, Ph.D.
Executive Vice President &
Chief Operating Officer
Bassett Healthcare



Joseph Diver
Chief Information Officer &
Vice President Information Technology
Bassett Healthcare



SYRACUSE UTILITIES, INC.

P.O. BOX 597 • 9583 BREWERTON RD. • BREWERTON, NY 13025

(315) 676-2021
FAX: (315) 676-2657

Friday, July 10, 2009

Rural Utility Service
Thomas P Jensen
USDA RD GTR

Dear Mr. Jensen:

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

ION has used Syracuse Utilities, Inc. as well as many local construction companies, investing in a huge amount of infrastructure and technical components to develop their network. This has helped support the local economy, retain and create jobs, and develop a much-needed broadband infrastructure in areas where there is little or no services available. ION has supported our company and continues to support us through their own development and growth.

As we look at Broadband Services in New York State, it is apparent that ION is the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and I believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,

Eugene M. Scibelli
President
Syracuse Utilities, Inc.



Thursday, July 09, 2009

Rural Utility Service
Thomas P Jansen
USDA Rural Development
New England Region

Dear Mr. Jansen;

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

ION has used local technical and equipment companies and has invested in a huge amount of infrastructure in order to develop the network. This has helped support the local economy, retain and create jobs, and develop a much-needed broadband infrastructure in areas where there is little or no services available. ION has supported our company and continues to support us through their own development and growth.

As we look at Broadband Services in New York State, it is apparent that ION is the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and I believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,


Ben Viglietta
Contract Manager

161 CLEAR ROAD ■ ORISKANY ■ NEW YORK 13424 ■ USA
(315)736-2206 ■ FAX: (315)736-2285 ■ EMAIL: INFO@FIBERINSTRUMENTSALES.COM
WWW.FIBERINSTRUMENTSALES.COM

**BLUEGLASS, LLC
PO BOX 275
CROWN POINT, NY 12928**

July 8, 2009

Rural Utility Service
Thomas P Jensen
USDA RD GFR

Dear Mr. Jensen,

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

The Rural Telephone Companies in New York lacked access to competitively priced, redundant backbone services until ION was born. Out of pure need, and developed on rural independent infrastructure, the concept of ION came to fruition. As you know, it has always been difficult to make a business model work for broadband services in rural Upstate New York, but each and every ION partner company has done it for over 100 years individually and over 1200 years combined. What better group to run a mostly rural statewide fiber network than the businesses that have been committed to and doing business in rural communities for their entire business lives? This rural telephone company foundation is the strength of ION, as we bring the know-how to offer great customer service, reliable services, and an unparalleled commitment to serve these unique rural areas. It is out of love for the State and a lifelong pledge to serve these rural areas that has allowed rural Upstate New York to benefit from the ingenuity, creativity, and growth of our independent rural phone companies.

It is important to note that ION has a history of neutral partnering, "cooperation", cooperating with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (Cable TV Companies, RLEC's, Wireless/Cellular providers, CLEC's, and private/public entities such as Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), CBN Connect, Southern Tier West, and Southern Tier East).

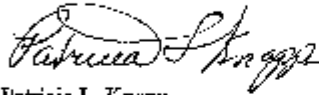
As we look at Broadband Services in New York State, ION has become the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and we believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also

gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

The ION network has already had a deep reaching impact on the upstate New York economy, has proven its solvency and sustainability, and has had a direct impact on Broadband connectivity and job creation in rural New York. It is now time to support the enhancement of the ION network to close the gaps, provide further redundancy and affordability, and develop additional unserved and underserved areas in New York.

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Patricia L. Knapp". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Patricia L. Knapp



PAETEC

August 5, 2009

VIA US MAIL.

Thomas P. Jenson, GFR New England
USDA / Rural Development - Telecommunications
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-3201

Dear Mr. Jenson:

I am writing to express PAETEC Communications, Inc.'s ("PAETEC") full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the owner of New York State's largest fiber optic backbone network.

As a telecommunications and information services provider serving a large part of New York itself, PAETEC uses ION to build and provide a portion of the necessary infrastructure that our business needs now and in the future. ION provides PAETEC with cost effective access to enter and compete in the market to provide broadband services throughout rural areas in New York. PAETEC believes ION is an essential part of the future of broadband in New York.

Rural communities in New York lack access to broadband services and that is making it hard for families and businesses to compete and succeed in these rural areas. ION has a history of neutral partnering or "coopetition." In other words, ION facilitates cooperation with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (e.g., Cable TV Companies, RLEC's, Wireless/Cellular providers, CLEC's, and private/public entities such as Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), CBN Connect, Southern Tier West, and Southern Tier East).

The ION network has already had a deep reaching impact on the upstate New York economy, has proven its solvency and sustainability, and has had a direct impact on broadband connectivity and job creation in rural New York. It is now time to support the enhancement of the ION network to close the gaps, provide further redundancy and affordability, and develop additional unserved and underserved areas in New York. Further development of ION also gives all broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new areas of service or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.



PAETEC

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,

JT Ambrosi
Vice President, Vendor Relations

Friday, July 10, 2009

Rural Utility Service
Thomas P Jensen
USDA Rural Development
New England Region

Dear Mr. Jensen:

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

ION has used local technical and equipment companies and has invested in a huge amount of infrastructure in order to develop this network. This has helped support the local economy, retain and create jobs, and develop a much-needed broadband infrastructure in areas where there is little or no services available. ION has supported our company and continues to support us through their own development and growth.

As we look at Broadband Services in New York State, it is apparent that ION is the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and I believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,



Timothy Williams
President / CEO



Headquarters
PICS Telecom International - 5225 North Avenue
Farmingdale, New York 11735
Phone: (516) 325-4222 - Toll-Free: (800) 331-7477 - Fax: (516) 325-2120



United Kingdom
PICS Telecom International Ltd - 20nditch House - 07c Church Road
Widmore - New Forest - SO46 4B United Kingdom
Phone: +44 (1753) 833291 - Fax: +44 (1753) 212111

CORNERSTONE

TELEPHONE COMPANY

2 THIRD STREET - SUITE 302 • TROY, NEW YORK 12180
518-272-1010 / 688-240-1812
Fax: 518-272-1647 / 586-308-2750

July 2, 2009

Thomas P. Janson, GFR New England
USDA / Rural Development - Telecommunications

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

As a retail service provider in New York State we are relying on ION to build and provide the necessary infrastructure that our business needs now and in the future. ION provides me with cost effective access to enter and compete in the market to provide broadband services throughout rural areas in New York. I believe ION is an essential part of the future of Broadband in New York State.

Rural communities in New York lack access to broadband services and that is making it hard for families and businesses to compete and succeed in these rural areas of New York. ION has a history of neutral partnering, "cooperation", cooperating with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (Cable TV Companies, RLEC's, Wireless/Cellular providers, CLEC's, and private/public entities such as Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), CBN Connect, Southern Tier West, and Southern Tier East).

The ION network has already had a deep reaching impact on the upstate New York economy, has proven its solvency and sustainability, and has had a direct impact on Broadband connectivity and job creation in rural New York. It is now time to support the enhancement of the ION network to close the gaps, provide further redundancy and affordability, and develop additional unserved and underserved areas in New York. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new areas of service or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,




Mr. Joe Calzone
President & COO
ION
80 State Street, 7th Floor
Albany, NY 12207

August 12, 2009

Dear Mr. Calzone:

The purpose of this correspondence is to provide ION with a firm schedule of ADVA Optical Networking's (ADVA's) ability to supply Optical Transport products based upon the following project requirements:

- 42 FSP3000 Optical Transport Systems equipped with a single 2.5Gbit/s or 10Gbit/s channel

ADVA is capable of shipping all 42 systems within 4 to 6 weeks of purchase order receipt, provided that a forecast is issued by ION 4 weeks prior to placement of the purchase order.

ION can count on ADVA not only to deliver the above products in a timely fashion, but also as a financially stable, industry-proven, and operationally capable partner. ADVA has been in business since 1994, is publicly traded (XETRA: ADV.DE) and had 2008 revenues of \$320M. As of year end 2008, ADVA ranked #1 in the deployment of Intelligent Ethernet Access Devices and #4 in Metro Optical Systems, with over 200 carrier and 10,000 enterprise customers globally.

ADVA can provide turnkey E&I services, including fiber characterization, engineering, installation, system commissioning, and project management to ensure a quality and timely network deployment, and has extensive experience in this regard.

In addition, ADVA offers a variety of network planning and management tools, as well as post-warranty support options to ensure that the network is maintained over its lifetime.

ADVA looks forward to the opportunity to partner with ION to ensure the successful completion of this project.

ADVA Optical Networking
North America, Inc.
5755 Peachtree Industrial Blvd.
Norcross, Georgia 30092
USA
Phone: +1 678 725 8000
Fax: +1 770 263 0482

E-mail: info@advaoptical.com
www.advaoptics.com





August 18, 2009

Mr. Joe Calzone
President & COO
ION
80 State Street, 7th Floor
Albany, NY 12207

Dear Mr. Calzone:

Cisco is extremely pleased to be working with ION with regard to your Broadband Stimulus application. The purpose of this letter is to provide ION with a firm schedule of Cisco's ability to supply optical equipment based on the following project requirements:

- 74 ONS-5454 MSPP/MSTP transport platforms. Each system will be capable of aggregating traditional facilities including DS1, DS3, STS1, OC3, STM1, OC12, STM4, OC48, and STM64 along with data services, including 10BaseT, 100BaseT or Gigabit Ethernet or ATM service via OC3c, OC12c or OC48c interfaces, onto a single optical transport facility via OC48, OC48 DWDM and OC192 line interfaces.

Cisco is capable of shipping the required equipment in a timely fashion to support ION's project goals. In addition to this, Cisco can also offer a broad range of solutions to ensure a successful project.

Cisco Optical Solutions

The need for efficiency and profitability demands that service providers increase service velocity, density, variety, and capacity. The Cisco Optical portfolio of network solutions meets these requirements from the metro edge, through the metro core, to the long-haul network. As the next step in the evolution of IP+Optical networking, Cisco's Optical solutions can provide:

- Complete optical restoration, topology, and transmission support to maximize service velocity.
- Multiservice delivery to maximize service density.
- Edge support for all optical interfaces to maximize service variety.
- Transport that is scalable and efficient to maximize service capacity throughout the network.

Cisco Lifecycle Support

Cisco delivers services using a lifecycle approach that can help ION successfully meet its business goals. The unique Cisco Lifecycle Services approach defines the requisite activities at each phase of the network lifecycle, offering a services framework that is independent of who performs the service activities—Cisco, partners, or customers themselves—and enabling multiple parties to provide the support needed in a coordinated manner. Based on industry best practices and methodologies, Cisco Lifecycle Services align service and support activities with your unique business and technology requirements throughout the network lifecycle.

Project Management

Cisco can provide ION with project management support for all project-related activities.

Cisco Advisory Services

Cisco Advisory Services for Service Providers can help ION create new services that meet market requirements and can be rapidly deployed. Cisco brings global experience and expertise that can help ION speed time-to-market and increase profitability, while allowing you to focus on the execution of delivering the new service.

Should you have questions or need further clarification, please feel free to contact me at 703-484-0411.

Sincerely,

Michael Danoff
Major Account Manager – US Service Provider
Cisco Systems, Inc.

Zito Media

Next-generation Internet, Data, Voice Networks

611 Vade Hill Road, Coudersport, PA 16815

August 13, 2009

NTIA
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Sirs:

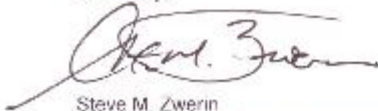
I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Broadband Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

Zito Media Communications, having the most extensive and expanding Optical fiber backbone in the Northern Tier of Pennsylvania believes that the interconnection of our two major networks would provide unprecedented rural expansion and telecommunication capabilities throughout this massive Interstate region. In concert with our own ARRA Broadband applications (1) Northern Pennsylvania Open Access Network and (2) the Central Pennsylvania Fiber Ring Project, the combined backbones would provide rural New York and Northern Pennsylvania with much needed next-generation Broadband services for cross-border business and institutional needs.

As a major service provider in Northern Pennsylvania we are relying on ION to build and provide the necessary infrastructure that many of our northern businesses need now and in the future. ION provides cost effective access to enter and compete in the market to provide broadband services throughout rural areas in New York. I believe ION is an essential part of the future of Broadband in New York State and for those business in northern Pennsylvania that rely heavily on products and services in New York State.

ION has a history of neutral partnering, "coopetition", cooperating with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (Cable TV Companies, RLEC's, Wireless/Cellular providers, CLEC's, and private/public entities such as Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), CBN Connect, Southern Tier West, and Southern Tier East). Through our interconnections, both companies would be able to provide advanced competitive products and services for our customers. We are excited at this interconnection opportunity.

Sincerely,



Steve M. Zwerin
Vice President – Business Development
Zito Media Communications, LLC

Rural Utility Service

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1 Page

Withheld in its entirety
pursuant to FOIA Exemption 4
(5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(4))



The North-Eastern Pennsylvania Telephone Company

720 Main Street, PO Box D, Forest City, PA 18421

Phone: 570-785-3131

Fax: 570-785-9299

Email: www.nep.net

August 7, 2009

Rural Utility Service
Thomas P. Jensen
USDA RD GFR

Dear Mr. Jensen:

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the New York state fiber optic backbone network that also reaches into North Eastern Pennsylvania.

The Rural Telephone Companies in Pennsylvania lack access to competitively priced, redundant backhaul services, which ION will help resolve. Out of pure need, and developed on rural independent infrastructure, the concept of ION came to fruition. As you know, it has always been difficult to make a business model work for broadband services in the rural communities of Pennsylvania and New York, but each and every ION partner company and rural telephone company has done it for over 100 years. What better group to run a mostly rural statewide fiber network than the businesses that have been committed to and doing business in rural communities for their entire business lives? This rural telephone company foundation is the strength of ION, as we bring the know-how to offer great customer service, reliable services, and an unparalleled commitment to serve these unique rural areas. It is out of love for our communities and a lifelong pledge to serve these rural areas that has allowed rural the areas of Pennsylvania and New York to benefit from the ingenuity, creativity, and growth of our independent rural phone companies.

It is important to note that ION has a history of neutral partnering, "cooperation", cooperating with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (Cable TV Companies, RLEC's, Wireless/Cellular providers, CLEC's, and private/public entities such as Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), CBN Connect, Southern Tier West, and Southern Tier East).

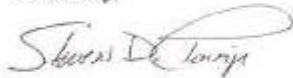
A large, stylized, italicized version of the letters "NEP" in a bold, black, serif font, positioned at the bottom of the page.

As we look at Broadband Services in North Eastern Pennsylvania and New York State, ION has become or will become the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and we believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State and our communities. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in Pennsylvania and New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

The ION network has already had a deep reaching impact on the rural economy, has proven its solvency and sustainability, and has had a direct impact on Broadband connectivity and job creation in rural Pennsylvania and New York. It is now time to support the enhancement of the ION network to close the gaps, provide further redundancy and affordability, and develop additional unserved and underserved areas in Pennsylvania and New York.

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband throughout Pennsylvania and New York.

Sincerely,



Steven D. Tourje
President

Crown Point Telephone Corporation
2829 NYS Rte 9N, P.O. Box 275
Crown Point, NY 12928
Phone (518) 597-3300 Fax (518) 597-3000

July 6, 2009

Rural Utility Service
Thomas P Jensen
USDA RD GTR

Dear Mr. Jensen;

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

The Rural Telephone Companies in New York lacked access to competitively priced, redundant backhaul services until ION was born. Out of pure need, and developed on rural independent infrastructure, the concept of ION came to fruition. As you know, it has always been difficult to make a business model work for broadband services in rural Upstate New York, but each and every ION partner company has done it for over 100 years individually and over 1200 years combined. What better group to run a mostly rural statewide fiber network than the businesses that have been committed to and doing business in rural communities for their entire business lives? This rural telephone company foundation is the strength of ION, as we bring the know-how to offer great customer service, reliable services, and an unparalleled commitment to serve these unique rural areas. It is out of love for the State and a lifelong pledge to serve these rural areas that has allowed rural Upstate New York to benefit from the ingenuity, creativity, and growth of our independent rural phone companies.

It is important to note that ION has a history of neutral partnering, "coopetition", cooperating with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (Cable TV Companies, RLEC's, Wireless/Cellular providers, CLEC's, and private/public entities such as Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), CBN Connect, Southern Tier West, and Southern Tier East).

As we look at Broadband Services in New York State, ION has become the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and we believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CRN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able

to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

The ION network has already had a deep reaching impact on the upstate New York economy, has proven its solvency and sustainability, and has had a direct impact on Broadband connectivity and job creation in rural New York. It is now time to support the enhancement of the ION network to close the gaps, provide further redundancy and affordability, and develop additional unserved and underserved areas in New York.

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shana Knapp-Macey".

Shana Knapp-Macey
President



German Town Telephone Company Inc.
P.O. Box 188 218 Main Street Germantown, NY 12526
toll free 877-437-6255 local 518-537-6255
fax 518-537-6700 web www.gtcwitel.com

July 6, 2009

Rural Utility Service
Thomas P Jensen
USDA RD GPK

Dear Mr. Jensen:

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

The Rural Telephone Companies in New York lacked access to competitively priced, redundant backhaul services until ION was born. Out of pure need, and developed on rural independent infrastructure, the concept of ION came to fruition. As you know, it has always been difficult to make a business model work for broadband services in rural Upstate New York, but each and every ION partner company has done it for over 100 years individually and over 1200 years combined. What better group to run a mostly rural statewide fiber network than the businesses that have been committed to and doing business in rural communities for their entire business lives? This rural telephone company foundation is the strength of ION, as we bring the know-how to offer great customer service, reliable services, and an unparalleled commitment to serve these unique rural areas. It is out of love for the State and a lifelong pledge to serve these rural areas that has allowed rural Upstate New York to benefit from the ingenuity, creativity, and growth of our independent rural phone companies.

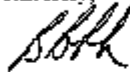
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As we look at Broadband Services in New York State, ION has become the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and we believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

The ION network has already had a deep reaching impact on the upstate New York economy, has proven its solvency and sustainability, and has had a direct impact on Broadband connectivity and job creation in rural New York. It is now time to support the enhancement of the ION network to close the gaps, provide further redundancy and affordability, and develop additional unserved and underserved areas in New York.

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,



Bruce C. Bolinsack
President



TELEPHONE • LONG DISTANCE • INTERNET • CABLE TV

July 6, 2009

Rural Utility Service
Thomas P Jensen
USDA RD GFR

Dear Mr. Jensen:

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

The Rural Telephone Companies in New York lacked access to competitively priced, redundant backhaul services until ION was born. Out of pure need, and developed on rural independent infrastructure, the concept of ION came to fruition. As you know, it has always been difficult to make a business model work for broadband services in rural Upstate New York, but each and every ION partner company has done it for over 100 years individually and over 1200 years combined. What better group to run a mostly rural statewide fiber network than the businesses that have been committed to and doing business in rural communities for their entire business lives? This rural telephone company foundation is the strength of ION, as we bring the know-how to offer great customer service, reliable services, and an unparalleled commitment to serve those unique rural areas. It is out of love for the State and a lifelong pledge to serve those rural areas that has allowed rural Upstate New York to benefit from the ingenuity, creativity, and growth of our independent rural phone companies.

It is important to note that ION has a history of neutral partnering, "cooperation", cooperating with all carriers and competitors, and has proven itself as a leader in this by establishing relationships with all types of network providers (Cable TV Companies, RJFC's, Wireless/Cellular providers, CLEC's, and private/public entities such as Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), CBN Connect, Southern Tier West, and Southern Tier East).

As we look at Broadband Services in New York State, ION has become the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and we believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

The Margaretville Telephone Company "Your Communications Partner"

P.O. Box 260, 50 Swart Street, Margaretville, New York 12455 (845) 586-3311 Fax (845) 586-4050 mic@catskill.net

The ION network has already had a deep reaching impact on the upstate New York economy, has proven its solvency and sustainability, and has had a direct impact on Broadband connectivity and job creation in rural New York. It is now time to support the enhancement of the ION network to close the gaps, provide further redundancy and affordability, and develop additional unserved and underserved areas in New York.

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband throughout New York.

Sincerely,



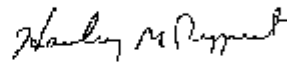
Glen Faulkner
General Manager
Margaretville Telephone Co.

Rural Utility Service
July 8, 2009
Page 2

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Sincerely,



Harley M. Ruppert
President



**The
Middleburgh
Telephone
Company**
FOUNDED IN
1877
REORGANIZED 1977

July 6, 2009

Rural Utility Service
Thomas P Jensen
USDA RD GPR

Dear Mr. Jensen;

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state fiber optic backbone network.

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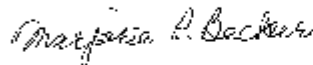
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Sincerely,



Marjorie R. Becker
President and General Manager
The Middleburgh Telephone Company



ARMSTRONG®

SAY HELLO TO THE FUTURE.

July 6, 2009

Rural Utility Service
Thomas P. Jensen
USDA RD GFR

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ARMSTRONG TELEPHONE COMPANY

125 FRONT STREET • ADDISON, NY 14601

607 359-2211 • FAX 607 359-2719

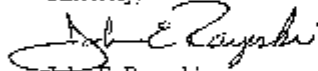
armstrongtelephone.com

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Sincerely,



John E. Rayeski
General Manager



July 6, 2009

Rural Utility Service
Thomas P Jensen
USDA RD GFR

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www.chazyandwestport.com

2 Champlain Ave.
P.O. Box 249
Westport, New York 12593
Tel 518.562.8211
Toll Free 1.866.298.5240
Fax 518.562.4911

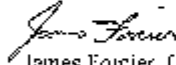
ESTABLISHED 1905

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Sincerely,



James Forcier, CEO
Chazy & Westport Telephone Corp.



34 Main Street, P.O. Box 749
Potsdam, NY 14673
ph 607-577-3717
fx 607-577-4728

July 6, 2009

Rural Utility Service
Thomas P Jensen
USDA RD GFR

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Sincerely,



Brian Ketchum
Vice President



July 8, 2009

Rural Utility Service
Thomas P Jensen
USDA RD G&R

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As we look at Broadband Services in New York State, ION has become the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and we believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental,

Dunkin' & Freonia Telephone Co. • Cassia 439 Telephone Corp. • Chamorro, Inc. • Del Long Distance • DFT Priority One • DFT Security • DFT Select One • DFT Wireless • Hiramco

40 Temple Street • PO Box 205
Oneonta, NY 14852
716-679-3031

www.dftcommunications.com
1-877-658-3100

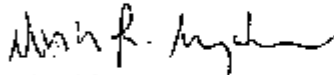
330 Flushing Avenue
Jonestown, NY 14751
716-483-8200

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The ION network has already had a deep reaching impact on the upstate New York economy, has proven its solvency and sustainability, and has had a direct impact on Broadband connectivity and job creation in rural New York. It is now time to support the enhancement of the ION network to close the gaps, provide further redundancy and affordability, and develop additional unserved and underserved areas in New York.

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Sincerely,



Mark R. Meyerson
President/COO



ONEIDA COUNTY RURAL TELEPHONE CO.

EST. 1933

9520 MAIN STREET
HOLLAND PATENT, NY 13364

TEL. (315) 566-0201
FAX (315) 365-5211

Friday, July 10, 2009

Rural Utility Service
Thomas Jensen
1 SDA RD GER

Dear Mr. Jensen,

I am writing to express my full support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York state Fiber optic backbone network.

ION has used local construction companies and has invested in a huge amount of infrastructure and technical components to develop their network. This has helped support the local economy, retain and create jobs, and develop a much-needed broadband infrastructure in areas where there is little or no services available. ION has supported our company and continues to support us through their own development and growth.

As we look at Broadband Services in New York State, it is apparent that ION is the principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and I believe that further development of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is imperative to the economic prosperity of the State. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers in New York the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas.

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Sincerely,

Thomas Jensen
Vice President



August 7, 2009

Rural Utility Service
Thomas P Jensen
USDA Rural Development
New England Region

Dear Mr. Jensen:

I am writing to express my support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Proposal being submitted by ION, the largest New York State fiber optic backbone network.

ION has helped service providers to open and expand broadband services through New York State, Pennsylvania and Vermont. ION has invested greatly in its infrastructure in order to develop its network across the geography. This has helped support the local economy, retain and create jobs, and develop a much-needed broadband infrastructure in areas where there is little or no services available. ION has supported our company and continues to support us through their own development and growth.

ION is a principal carrier of rural Broadband traffic, and I believe that expansion of ION's Broadband Fiber Optic Network is necessary in helping to foster economic prosperity in the states of New York, Pennsylvania and Vermont. With further development of the ION network, the regional carrier, quasi-governmental, and not for profit community networks such as CBN Connect, DANC (Development Authority of the North Country), Southern Tier East and Southern Tier West, will be able to accomplish their Broadband deployment initiatives. Further development of ION also gives all Broadband carriers the ability to establish new or enhance their current services, especially in the rural areas. This is especially true for Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom as ION expands its services into Vermont.

ION is the kind of project we can and should all support, as it goes far to bring the availability of Broadband to a vast amount of rural communities. It also helps drive economic growth inside these communities, and offers the ability to enhance services and provide affordable Broadband. I am proud to endorse ION's efforts.

Sincerely,

Roger Nishi
Vice-President, Industry Relations

P.O. BOX 9
WAITSFIELD, VERMONT 05673-0009
TELEPHONE 802-496-3331
OR 1-800-495-2331
FAX 802-496-7040



Communications
Public Safety Building
172 Co Highway 33W
Cooperstown, New York 13326
Phone: (607) 547-5351
Fax: (607) 547-7529

August 10, 2009

Jim Becker

Independent Operators Network
80 State Street
Suite 700
Albany, New York 12207

Dear Jim,

Having the opportunity to attend your presentation in Binghamton a few months ago I understand your project and support your application for your grant to provide access to unserved and underserved areas through many of the counties in upstate New York including through Otsego County. Every day we see an increased need for access to high speed reliable broadband at an affordable and reasonable cost.

Otsego County is also applying for stimulus funding to provide access to un-served and underserved areas of the county where your build may not cover. Our project could close gaps and provide a backfill to a proposed new Public Safety Communications system and provide a network for interoperable communications.

I am excited about the large fiber network you have already and this tremendous potential for what this build could accomplish for New York state especially where economic growth and educational opportunities are concerned.

Together our efforts could provide services to many rural locations.

If I can be of any further assistance please contact me at 607-547-7530.

Sincerely,

Roy Althiser Jr.
Otsego County E-911 Coordinator