

**ROBERT J. WITTMAN**

1ST DISTRICT, VIRGINIA

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

September 18, 2020

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Tamarah Holmes, Ph.D.  
Director, Office of Broadband  
Department of Housing and Community Development  
600 East Main Street, Suite 300  
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Director Holmes:

I am writing in support of the two Hanover County FY 2021 Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) grant applications to expand high-speed broadband availability in the First Congressional District through Partnerships with Comcast and CenturyLink. Approval of these applications would help meet the critical need to buildout high-speed broadband service to residents in parts of Hanover County.

Rural residents in Virginia's First Congressional District appreciate the value of high-speed broadband access. Providing reliable broadband access is vital for commercial stability, job creation, distance learning, and telehealth service expansion. Throughout the First Congressional District of Virginia, as in other largely rural areas, economic incentives are needed to expand broadband access, and the VATI program has been a successful vehicle of meeting that need. VATI encourages private telecommunications providers to enlarge their coverage and gives localities the ability to design the expansion that is right for their communities. This eases the financial burden associated with construction costs, broadens service, and creates a successful public-private partnership (P3) for the awardees and for the Commonwealth.

Hanover county has collaborated with both Comcast and CenturyLink to utilize state grant funds to amplify local and private funding. These applications are resourcefully designed and embody a first-rate use of state resources with a high rate of private leverage. Awarding these grants will provide broadband access to approximately 1,822 currently unserved homes, businesses, and community anchors in Hanover County. The proposed Hanover County applications will increase educational opportunities and economic growth for the area.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of the Hanover County applications. Moreover, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert J. Wittman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Robert J. Wittman  
Member of Congress