

ROBERT J. WITTMAN
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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 Kew Kent County FY 2021 Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) grant application to provide high-speed broadband to portions of New Kent County that remain unserved or underserved. This New Kent County application, in partnering with Cox Communications, will help expand reliable broadband service and advance their mission in providing broadband service to the entire county.

Our nation's telecommunications are revolutionizing the way Virginians work, communicate, and educate, but many rural Virginians are left behind. Broadband is a critical driver of economic growth; it has become a lifeline to access healthcare, retrieve educational material, earn a living, and is ever more important during the COVID-19 pandemic. It has become increasingly clear that access to broadband is a must-have to meet those goals, which is why it is critical to support efforts to close the digital divide. Throughout the First Congressional District of Virginia, as in other rural areas of Virginia, economic incentives are required to expand broadband access, and the VATI program has done an exceptional job of meeting that need. VATI encourages public-private partnerships that give local governments the ability to design the development that makes the most sense for their communities.

New Kent County has teamed up with Cox Communications to provide reliable high-speed broadband to the most vulnerable in the County. The proposed grant application project will provide access to multiple levels of high-speed broadband to 698 homes and 58 non-residential lots, consisting of 15 religious institutions, 1 school, 12 businesses and 30 non-residential lots. Providing the state dollars needed to accomplish this first-rate project is critical to increasing the quality of life for numerous New Kent County residents.

I am happy to offer my support for this well-planned effort. Thank you for your consideration of the New Kent County VATI application. 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