

ROBERT J. WITTMAN
1ST DISTRICT, VIRGINIA



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

September 1, 2021

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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:

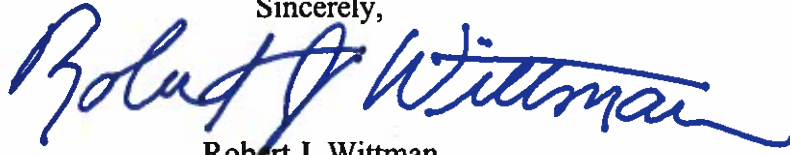
I am writing in support of the two Hanover County FY 2022 Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) grant applications to expand high-speed broadband availability in the First Congressional District through partnerships with CenturyLink and All Points Broadband. Approval of these applications would help meet the critical need to buildout high-speed broadband service to residents 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 has collaborated with CenturyLink and All Points Broadband (APB) 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. The Connect Hanover Initiative seeks to provide universal broadband coverage to Hanover residents. The goal is to provide broadband internet to all homes and businesses in the County. Moreover, the Connect Hanover Initiative collaborates with Dominion Energy and Rappahannock Electric Cooperative to achieve this goal. The Hanover County Board of Supervisors has appropriated \$17 million toward making this goal a reality. The proposed Hanover applications will increase educational opportunities and economic growth for the area.

Thank you for your consideration of the Hanover County applications. Moreover, if you have any concerns or questions, 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