

June 21, 2022

Cullen Robbins
Director of the Telecom/NUSF Department
Nebraska Public Service Commission
1200 N Street, Ste. 300
Lincoln, NE 68508

RE: Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program with Cox Communications – SUPPORT

Dear Mr. Robbins:

I am writing today in strong support of Cox Communications' grant application to partner with the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program to bridge the digital divide effectively, sustainably, and equitably, by removing barriers and partnering to increase broadband adoption and deploy additional infrastructure to bring more Nebraskans online. The Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) is the Council of Governments for the six-county Omaha-Council Bluffs region and serves as the Economic Development District for Washington County, Nebraska. In these roles MAPA has partnered with organizations and leaders across the state to advocate for the expansion of broadband service to all Nebraskans.

The state of Nebraska wants to ensure that all its citizens have access to modern broadband speeds and the infrastructure needed to meet customer needs today and into the future; furthermore, when the time comes for new internet subscribers to connect, it's important they have the support they need to navigate the technology. Cox has a proven track record of partnering with organizations and community leaders to educate these individuals about programs such as Cox's Connect2Compete, ConnectAssist, and Digital Academy and the federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) designed to successfully connect them to affordable, reliable, high-speed broadband service.

Notably, Washington County will realize an increase in economic vitality by partnering with Cox to deploy additional broadband infrastructure. Expanding broadband access will not only open the door to new opportunities presented by our increasingly connected world like access to education, healthcare services, and employment opportunities, it will also lead to the creation of new jobs, population growth, higher rates of new business opportunities, and lower unemployment rates. Cox has a proven track record as an exceptional public-private partner through their work with non-profits and public entities and will no doubt bring that same level of partnership to Washington County.

Should you have any questions or like additional information, please contact me at 402-444-6866, ext. 3224 or by email at mhelgerson@mapacog.org.

Sincerely,



Michael Helgerson
Executive Director