

Nebraska Broadband Bridge Grant Committee,

I'm writing this letter in support of the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Grant application by Diller Telephone Company/Diode Communications. I would like to share a little about our internet usage and how this project would be beneficial for ourselves and the local area.

We are a family of 4, with the two children both in high school. When we first moved to our home 6 years ago, we were getting our television through a streaming service. At the beginning, our bandwidth did not support the needed capacity to effectively stream. We did upgrade through Diode and the bandwidth problems have greatly improved. But as children aged, more devices became dependent on broadband. In the evenings, it is not uncommon for the 4 of us to all be on separate devices with 2 different tv's streaming some content, as well. We do not have "extra" internet of things connected devices that some modern homes do. I'm not sure if our level would support those devices or not.

The pandemic exposed weakness across many sectors of business. Internet service providers were no exception. At that time, both of my children were schooling from home and my wife was also forced to work from home. This, along with everyone else's increased usage, caused major connection problems. As a local school board member, we came to understand the zoom programs from school were a failure. My wife was trying to access a server based in Michigan and struggled maintaining a stable connection.

Another area that will benefit greatly from this project would be area agribusinesses. Modern farming operations have greatly increased their reliance on internet access. So much equipment has now been manufactured with computer based controllers and monitors to efficiently operate. Most troubleshooting equipment needs connection to a database to resolve problems. Increased bandwidth through fiber will allow access not only in a house and maybe machine shed office, but will allow for bigger networks to be set up on farms to expand the footprint of connectivity.

Ultimately, this project will give rural citizens more equal access to connectivity compared to their urban friends. Increased speed, data size and reliability are all big benefits of this project. I would encourage the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Grant Committee to approve funding for this and hopefully other rural broadband projects across the state.

Thanks,
Derrick and Jessi Damrow
Beatrice, Nebraska