

Statement on Letter from Larry Strickling

Although disappointed, Citynet is not surprised by the response of Larry Strickling, the assistant secretary for communications and information at the U.S. Department of Commerce. His agency had the choice of thoroughly evaluating a request from a company that employs many West Virginians and is a leader in technology deployment or defaulting to the whims of political officials. Secretary Strickling took the path of least resistance.

NTIA officials never asked to meet with Citynet face to face to discuss our concerns before they issued their flawed findings. In fact, their review was cursory at best and not conducted in a credible manner. Given President Obama's commitment to the American public that stimulus funds would be spent in a transparent manner, it is disappointing they would not have taken the time to meet with Citynet to discuss our concerns.

More importantly, we are encouraged that in the short time Governor Earl Ray Tomblin has been in office there has been a greater willingness to discuss these issues in the proper forum, the West Virginia Broadband Council. We are also pleased that former circuit Judge Dan O'Hanlon is working to find a resolution. We look forward to working with the Tomblin administration.

Citynet will not be deterred by the letter from Secretary Strickling. We will continue to advocate for the best interests of the citizens of the state. In addition, we intend to educate and work with policy leaders in the state on the need for a competitive, vibrant, high-speed Internet infrastructure that has capacity to meet the needs of the new economy of the 21st century.

Jim Martin

Citynet