



*State of North Carolina  
Office of the Governor*

*Roy Cooper  
Governor*

May 17, 2019

*20301 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, N. C. 27699-0301*

Mr. Sonny Perdue, Secretary  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

RE: USDA Reconnect Grant-Rural Broadband  
SkyBest Communications, Inc.

Dear Secretary Perdue:

This letter is to offer my unconditional support to the ReConnect Grant Application filed by SkyBest Communications, Inc. (a subsidiary of Skyline Telephone Membership Corporation (SkyBest)), both of which provide service in rural areas of western North Carolina. This specific grant would enable SkyBest to provide fiber based broadband service to approximately 350 currently unserved customers in the Triplett community of Watauga County. While the area is largely residential, the project will also provide high-speed Internet service to the local volunteer fire department for the first time. The Fiber-To-The-Premise (FTTP) network will be capable of symmetrical broadband services of up to 1Gbps.

North Carolina has a dedicated Broadband Infrastructure Office within N.C. Department of Information Technology, which administers the State Broadband Plan that can be accessed at [www.ncbroadband.gov](http://www.ncbroadband.gov). In 2018, the North Carolina General Assembly enacted the Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology Act (GREAT Act), which provides matching state grants to encourage rural broadband deployment. North Carolina law also permits public utilities in North Carolina to provide broadband services, and a bill is currently before the General Assembly that would also authorize Electric Membership Corporations to seek federal grants to deploy broadband infrastructure. In 2018, the General Assembly established an expedited process for small cell site permitting, the Department of Transportation, which manages 80 percent of the

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established an online permitting approval process to expedite utility construction, and further streamlining of the permitting processes will be considered during the current session.

Broadband is essential to a high quality of life and economic opportunity for rural communities. We appreciate the commitment of the USDA to this effort and I pledge the continuing support of my administration to a similar effort at the State level.

With kind regards, I am

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roy Cooper". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "R" and "C".

Roy Cooper

RAC/sm