

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

J. ERIC BOYETTE
SECRETARY & STATE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

May 7, 2019

The Honorable Secretary Sonny Perdue
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D. C. 20250-1597

RE: Letter of Support for 2019 USDA Reconnect Grant for Columbus, Richmond, and Henderson Counties in NC

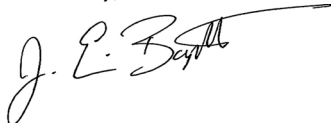
Dear Secretary Perdue:

We are writing in support of Wilkes Communications, Inc/RiverStreet Networks and their proposal for building Fiber-To-The-Premise (FTTP) in rural Columbus, Richmond, and Henderson Counties in North Carolina.

The Columbus County (Service Telephone Company dba RiverStreet Networks) service area targets 1,317 rural customers southeast of Fair Bluff, NC. This service area includes one community anchor institution which is the Fair Bluff Fire Department #2 site. The Richmond County (Ellerbe Telephone Company dba RiverStreet Networks) service area targets 436 underserved residents in three disparate portions of the exchange. The three areas are (1) Green Lake, southeast of Ellerbe, (2) The Towns of Norman and Wind Blow, NC, northeast of Ellerbe, and (3) the Hwy 73 West area northwest of Ellerbe. The Henderson County (Saluda Mountain Telephone Company dba RiverStreet Networks) service area targets 671 residents in the general areas of Macedonia Road and the Whites Lake Subdivision (and surrounding communities).

We recognize the importance of broadband to citizens in these three rural counties. Such improvements will increase educational opportunities and economic growth in the area. Their proposed investment in broadband infrastructure utilizing a Reconnect Grant win would greatly improve the opportunities only faster broadband can afford. Please consider their application and know we will stand in support of their efforts.

Sincerely,



J. Eric Boyette
Secretary & SCIO
North Carolina Department of Information Technology