

Michael Bergan
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House of Representatives

State of Iowa
Eighty-Ninth General Assembly
STATEHOUSE
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

COMMITTEES
Human Resources
Economic Growth
Labor
Way and Means

APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
Administration & Regulation, *Vice*
Chair

July 19, 2021

Office of the Chief Information Officer
200 E Grand Ave
Des Moines, IA 50309

Re: Harmony Telephone Company – Broadband Grant Application

Dear Friends,

Harmony Telephone Company, in collaboration with Spring Grove Communications, Mabel Cooperative Telephone Company and MiEnergy Cooperative as MiBroadband, continues to be a strong community support in expanding broadband opportunity to Iowans. Harmony Telephone Company has been instrumental in making the necessary investments in our area to insure viability in communication infrastructure. With current fiber optic service expansion taking place, Harmony Telephone has developed a plan to bring comprehensive broadband coverage to an expanded customer base.

I can attest to the need for broadband in the area designated in the grant application. In previously serving as a county supervisor and now as a state representative, I have firsthand knowledge of the lack of broadband and other communication challenges in the proposed grant area. The Driftless Area of northeast Iowa is blessed with a diverse topography and natural attributes that includes limestone bluffs, cold-water trout streams and forests throughout our farm communities. These natural assets also contribute to challenges in communications, whether by cellphone, radio wave, microwave, or fiber optics. The hilly terrain and limestone limit the effectiveness of several communication options, increasing the costs substantially. I personally maintain a concern for our public safety, in having prompt response of police, fire, and ambulance services. The inequity in internet service options hampers students in their education opportunity, farms and businesses in improved efficiency and profitability, and overall quality of life expected from technology today.

I am encouraged by Harmony Telephone Company's leadership and initiative in meeting the broadband needs of our community, ensuring that customers have 100/100 broadband access. I support their application for grant assistance from the Office of the Chief Information Officer. I ask that due diligence is made in the review of their application.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Bergan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" and last name "Bergan" clearly distinguishable.

Michael Bergan

Board of Education

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Decorah Community School District**Phone:** (563) 382-4208 **Fax:** (563) 387-0753

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July 14, 2021

Office of the Chief Information Officer of the State of Iowa
200 E. Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50309

RE: Empower Rural Iowa, Emergency Broadband Grant Program – NOFA #006

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Decorah Community School District, I wish to express my full support for the Harmony Telephone Company's grant proposal. Our students, families, and staff face unique challenges related to quality home internet access and Harmony Telephone Company has been a wonderful partner in trying to provide solutions.

The combination of the rural nature and unique topography of Winneshiek County create challenges for organizations like Harmony Telephone Company and the customers they serve. I personally know people who had to make unique arrangements during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to complete school-related online work. One of our teachers frequently had to make special trips into town in order to upload content to his Canvas Learning Management System class page because he did not have the bandwidth at home. I know a mother who took her children to work with her so her students could participate in Zoom lessons with teachers because she wasn't confident their home internet would be adequate.

I believe access to high-speed internet is just as necessary as electricity for 21st century families. I am hopeful this grant can assist Harmony Telephone Company in providing solutions for Winneshiek County families.

Sincerely,

Mark M. Lane, Superintendent of Schools

July 2021

Office of the Chief Information Officer of the State of Iowa
200 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50309

RE: Empower Rural Iowa, Emergency Broadband Grant Program – NOFA #006

To Whom It May Concern:

As a local farmer in northeast Iowa, I stand behind Harmony Telephone Company and their commitment to providing fiber to the premise in Eastern Winneshiek County. I realize firsthand the importance of being successful with what we produce and provide to not only remain sustainable for ourselves but also for the future generation of farmers.

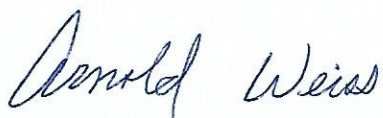
With the changing demographics, it is of utmost importance for us to be able to offer sustainable farming resources. A solid broadband connection available in our area, would provide a positive impact to our current operation for many years. Almost everything we can and want to provide is dependent on having a connection to internet services.

Currently, many areas of northeast Iowa are either unserved or are considered underserved when it comes to broadband services. Having the opportunity to receive the service of fiber deployed broadband to our rural agricultural homestead is critical for us to accurately function now, and well into the future.

Farming is advancing through the adoption of new technologies. We need broadband to incorporate these technologies into our advanced farming operations. Having the peace of mind of knowing the opportunity to receive a broadband connection is enlightening and creates a positive option for us to remain productive in agriculture and to continue providing for and helping others.

We feel confident in Harmony Telephone Company and strongly support their efforts in providing this critical service to our area.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Donald Weiss". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.