

September 14, 2022

Ryan Kocsondy
Director
CEN
55 Farmington Ave., 6th Floor
Hartford, CT 06105

Dear Mr. Kocsondy:

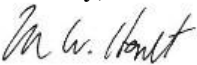
We understand that the Connecticut Education Network (CEN) is applying for funds through the Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure (MM) grant program administered by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to expand its middle-mile footprint in the metro Hartford region of Connecticut. The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), representing 38 metro Hartford towns and cities, is very pleased to support this endeavor.

We recognize that CEN plays a vital role in Connecticut's broadband system, providing connectivity and Internet access for our state's K-12 schools, libraries, higher education institutions, and municipal governments. CEN has created a secure, reliable, and value-added network that enables these institutions to fulfill their teaching, research, and governance missions with the best information tools available. We also respect CEN's not-for-profit model and open access architecture. The improvements described in CEN's proposal will increase network capacity, improve resiliency, and expand Internet access, peering, and cloud connectivity. The combination will enable CEN to support adjacent requirements for future residential networks.

To reduce the digital divide throughout our 38-member town region, the Capitol Region Council of Governments has been actively promoting the development of a region-wide fiber optic network with universal coverage and proactive programs. With the opportunity now of federal support through ARPA and IIJA programs, prospects for regional networks have increased considerably. Federal programs clearly favor "open access" networks and competition, the direction CRCOG has championed for years. "Open access" last mile networks require wide distribution of access points to middle mile networks that are also open access. The program proposed for CEN will provide the necessary breadth of middle mile access points to realize universal connectivity, future proof speeds, and reliability that current monopoly cable networks do not offer.

Federal government support to CEN through the MM Infrastructure grant program is crucial to enabling these improvements. We look forward to working together to achieve these shared service objectives in Connecticut that will build a healthy and prosperous future for us all.

Sincerely,


Matthew W. Hart
Executive Director