

GOVERNOR PATRICK CONTINUES TO PUSH FOR FEDERAL FUNDING TO EXPAND BROADBAND IN WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

State submits application for \$45.4 million to bring high-speed Internet to unserved and under-served communities

BOSTON - Thursday, March 25, 2010 - Governor Patrick today announced that the state has submitted an application for \$45.4 million in federal stimulus funding to expand broadband access in western Massachusetts. The application, called MassBroadband 123 and submitted by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI), a division of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC), seeks funding under Round Two of the U.S. Department of Commerce's Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP).

"Bringing adequate broadband service to unserved and under-served communities in western Massachusetts has been a priority of my administration from the start," said Governor Patrick. "MassBroadband 123 offers an enduring, cost-effective solution to one of our most urgent, long-standing problems and will lay the foundation for sustainable prosperity to a region covering over a third of our state. I cannot overstate either the importance of this project to the Commonwealth or the benefits it will provide the citizens of western Massachusetts."

"Expanding broadband service is a key element of improving and investing in our state's infrastructure," said Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray. "The MassBroadband 123 application supports our administration's goal to provide broadband service to un-served and under-served communities, which will be a catalyst for increased community and economic development and long-term growth in the western region of Massachusetts."

MassBroadband 123 will build more than 1,338 miles of fiber-optic cable to connect homes and businesses, as well as community anchor institutions, including community colleges, public safety institutions, hospitals and libraries in a proposed service area covering over one-third of Massachusetts.

MassBroadband 123 also builds on the Governor's ongoing efforts to expand access to broadband in unserved and under-served regions of the Commonwealth. In 2008, Governor

Patrick signed legislation that he introduced to direct millions of dollars in capital funding to support broadband expansion projects. The Commonwealth is providing \$26.2 million in matching funds in this BTOP application to bring the total investment in the proposed project to \$71.6 million.

The application strengthens ongoing work to install 55 miles of fiber-optic cable along I-91. This \$5 million project is an important component of MassBroadband 123 and was recently cited in President Obama's National Broadband Plan as a model for leveraging transportation projects to deploy broadband infrastructure. If the MBI is selected for a BTOP award, the federal stimulus funding would advance the completion of the project and connect western Massachusetts with broadband high-speed Internet.

"Providing affordable, quality broadband connectivity to every community in this region is our top priority as we work to bridge the digital divide in western Massachusetts," said MBI Director Judith Dumont. "I want to thank all of our partners, state and federal leaders, community groups and our entire team for the tremendous collaboration that went into producing MassBroadband 123."

The state's Chief Information Officer and a member of the MBI's Board of Directors, Anne Margulies said, "This middle-mile fiber network will connect unserved and underserved communities in a region that spans more than a third of the state. The Governor has made it a priority to bring broadband access to every corner of the state, helping businesses grow and expanding access to important services. This infrastructure will help people connect with agencies such as the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Veterans' Services, and Labor and Workforce Development, leading to better services not just for the people in the region, but for the entire Commonwealth."

"As new technologies arrive to improve our efforts to keep the public safe, our first responders need the infrastructure in place to ensure that all Massachusetts residents receive the best services available," said Secretary Mary Elizabeth Heffernan, Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. "The MassBroadband 123 project will deliver service that is one thousand times faster than currently exists to more than 375 public safety locations in the region. That means better police, fire and other public safety services for our neighbors in western Massachusetts." The proposed MassBroadband 123 network will provide a publicly owned, open access, middle-mile backbone infrastructure, which enables last-mile service providers to connect to the middle-mile infrastructure and bring broadband services to households and businesses. The middle-mile backbone will place fiber as close to population and business centers as possible, providing

sufficient fiber for last-mile providers to use along their entire routes, enabling connection at virtually any point of the network.

For more information on the Massachusetts application for federal funding, please visit www.massbroadband.org.