OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

July 24, 2009

RICK PERRY

GOVERNOR

The Honorable Todd Staples
Commissioner of Agriculture
Texas Department of Agriculture
P.O. Box 12847
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Commissioner Staples:

Per our discussions, I am designating you as the state lead as Texas pursues federal grants to improve access to broadband service in rural communities across the state.

As you know, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and the Broadband Data Improvement Act of 2008 created three programs aimed at improving rural access to broadband technology: the State Broadband Data and Development Grant Program (SBDDGP), the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) and the Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP).

Although Texas has already implemented strategies to ensure greater access to broadband services in rural areas of the state, these programs will enhance our efforts.

As governor, it is my intention that Texas submit recommendations for allocation of funds for qualifying projects during the BTOP application process, as set out in the Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) published July 1, 2009, as well as future NOFAs issued under BTOP.

Because broadband issues affect several state agencies, it is important that you consult with the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) and the Texas Public Safety Commission (PSC) (with regard to law enforcement applications) where appropriate, as you prepare recommendations for grant applications. As the state lead on our broadband activities, you will need to designate an eligible entity for application to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) for the SBDDGP, to certify such eligible entity, and to take binding action on behalf of the State of Texas in this matter.

As governor, I am also authorizing you, in consultation with PUC and PSC, to make recommendations to the U.S. Department of Commerce, NTIA or Rural Utilities Service on behalf of the State of Texas, regarding qualifying projects for broadband infrastructure grants and loans under the NOFA that has been issued or NOFAs that may be issued.

Sincerely,

Rick Perry

Rick Perry
Governor

RP:kwp

cc: Texas Public Utility Commission Commissioners
Texas Public Safety Commission