



## STATE OF TENNESSEE

**PHIL BREDESEN**  
GOVERNOR

September 2, 2008

Chairman Kevin J. Martin  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: WC Docket 07-38 (Broadband Data Collection)

Dear Chairman Martin:

Two years ago, the state of Tennessee had reached a crossroads. Our state's leaders had to find a way to ensure that all Tennesseans have access to quality broadband service; however, we had no mechanism to identify the broadband gaps. At that time, I was director of the Tennessee Regulatory Authority. We seemingly had two options – 1. Regulate broadband providers further through a state mandated data collection process, or 2. Find a way to work with providers to create a broadband map.

Fortunately, we had heard about a program in Kentucky that had achieved an accurate and useful broadband map through a cooperative public-private partnership. This program, ConnectKentucky, worked not only with all broadband providers, but also with local leaders throughout the state to find broadband solutions through a grassroots process of stimulating demand for broadband services to drive the supply of broadband services.

Today, I am both proud and grateful to report that Tennessee chose the cooperative route to broadband expansion. Through his Trail to Innovation, Governor Bredesen worked in collaboration with the Tennessee Broadband Taskforce to establish Connected Tennessee as a public-private partnership to expand statewide broadband access and use.

Connected Tennessee's first step was to work hand-in-hand and on the ground with broadband providers to map the most granular gaps in broadband service. Providers stepped up willingly to participate in this process that benefits everyone, and Tennessee now has a complete and accurate broadband map that is continuously updated down to the street and household level.

Most importantly, this broadband map – and the series of customized, local maps that go along with it – is one of the many research tools that Connected Tennessee uses in every county to expand broadband. Using these tools, local community leaders are joining with broadband providers in every Tennessee county to find local technology solutions for local technology challenges. In every county, eCommunity Leadership Teams are building awareness campaigns, creating broadband applications for citizen services, and formulating local technology plans to address the broadband gaps.

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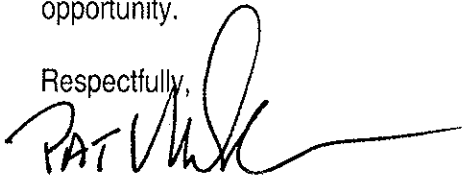
In just the first six months of the Connected Tennessee program, broadband adoption has increased in rural areas of the state. Statewide, Tennessee's broadband growth has exceeded the national growth rate. Computer ownership among Tennesseans is significantly higher after only six months, and our businesses – particularly small businesses – are using broadband at significantly higher rates.

As you contemplate broadband mapping for the rest of the nation, I can appreciate the challenge that lay before you. I understand how important it is for all states to have accurate broadband maps in order to address the broadband gaps. The good news is that there is a highly effective and proven way to achieve this goal – by working cooperatively with broadband providers through state public-private partnerships. The most exciting part of this approach is that it results in not only a highly effective broadband map, but it also brings communities together to solve their own broadband challenges, and gives them effective tools with which to work.

I encourage the Commission to use this proven public-private partnership model for broadband mapping and expansion. There are Congressional efforts underway to enable this model, and it is my hope that every state will soon have the resources to develop state-based public-private partnerships for broadband mapping and expansion.

I fear that a regulated effort by the FCC to collect broadband availability data may very well slow or hinder the progress of Connected Tennessee and other state-based programs. Connected Tennessee's Trail to Innovation is just one illustration of this cooperative process at work. We now have the opportunity to work together as a nation to ensure that all Americans can benefit from this cooperative spirit and innovative model. My hope is that, working together, we can seize this opportunity.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "PAT MILLER", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Pat Miller  
Senior Advisor and Director of Legislative Affairs  
Office of the Governor

cc: Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein  
Commissioner Michael Copps  
Commissioner Robert McDowell  
Commissioner Deborah Tate