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April 24, 2020

The Honorable Tim Thomas
Federal Co-Chair
Appalachian Regional Commission
1666 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20009-1068

Dear Chairman Thomas,

I have been notified that several well-respected organizations in my state have partnered together to submit a grant application to the Appalachian Regional Commission under the Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) Initiative to support the **Thundercloud Broadband Project**.

I am writing to express my full support of the Thundercloud Broadband Project and these organizations, which include: Marshall University, Mountain Health Network, Marshall Health, Marshall University Research Corporation, Alpha Technologies, and other private and public sector leaders. I understand that, if approved, funding provided by this opportunity will be utilized to support a \$5.7 million high-speed fiber deployment project that will have a positive impact in Cabell and Wayne counties in West Virginia.

Specifically, this project will deploy high-speed fiber between Barboursville and Huntington, while creating a robust fiber ring to upgrade service in the heart of downtown and the city's Opportunity Zones, and will create a point of access for further broadband deployment in rural Wayne County.

Building efficient and adequate broadband infrastructure is vital for fostering economic growth, creating jobs, improving educational attainment, expanding access to remote healthcare services, and providing better opportunities for the businesses and people of my state. Having access to fast and reliable internet service is no longer a luxury, but a necessity for everyone, and that is why I am proud to lend my strong support to this broadband project.

I appreciate your noting my interest and support of this application and providing it a full and fair review. If you have questions please contact Ryan Thorn in my Charleston office at 304-342-5855. Thank you in advance for your attention and consideration.

With warmest regards,



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator