Iowa Association of
Electric Cooperatives
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

September 20, 2022

Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear National Telecommunication and Information Administration,

On behalf of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC), this letter is being written to express our support of Dairyland Power Cooperative's (DPC) Tri-State Fiber Deployment Project. Iowa's electric co-ops have been at the forefront of economic development throughout the rural communities of our state since the formation of Farmers Electric Cooperative was established in Kalona, IA in 1917. While many parts of rural Iowa are fortunate enough to be provided communications service from quality independent telecom cooperatives, there is still a great need in many places for improved connectivity. We applaud DPC's efforts to help provide that critical connection to more homes, farms, and businesses; in an economy that demands it.

This multifaceted endeavor that will bring about much needed middle mile infrastructure to predominately rural communities in northeast Iowa, southeast Minnesota, southwest Wisconsin, and northwest Wisconsin through the NTIA's Middle Mile Grant Program. The IAEC is mindful of the significance of middle mile infrastructure to expand internet networks closer to unserved and underserved communities. Further, DPC will offer equal opportunity for internet service providers to connect to last-mile infrastructure in a cost-effective manner, ultimately promoting economic prosperity and closing the digital divide that continues to hold back progress in some areas. DPC has a proven history of commitment to having a positive impact in the communities they serve and implementing middle mile infrastructure plan such as this, that will increase and subsequently lower costs and offer increased options for citizens, is another example of that mission.

The IAEC is a statewide member association representing the 48 rural electric cooperatives that are responsible for the generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity to approximately 650,000 Iowans across all 99 counties in our State. Just as our country took issue with her most rural citizens unable to power their homes nearly 100 years ago, we know that today's challenges of broadband access is a problem that we can solve. The IAEC and our members like Dairyland stand ready to help be part of the solution. We emphatically support DPC's project.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles J. Soderberg
IAEC Executive Vice President & General Manager

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