

Attention: Sara J. Clarke, Secretary

Subject: Broadband expansion in the Massachusetts Towns of Hardwick, Petersham, and Montague

Dear Ms. Clarke,

I reside at 145 Dry Hill Road, Montague, MA and am writing with regard to the Mass Broadband Institute's (MBI) decision to provide funds to Comcast Cable for the expansion of internet access to underserved communities over the fiber optics option as proposed by Matrix Design Group (Matrix).

MBI contracted with Tilson Technology Management (Tilson) to evaluate the Comcast cable and the Matrix fiber optic options. It based its decision on Tilson's findings. Tilson is a provider of fiber optic engineering and construction management. It is a competitor of Matrix. The real or perceived conflict of interest should have been recognized by MBI. Any Tilson recommendation is at best suspect and should not be considered. MBI should be held accountable for its mismanagement of funds through contracting with this entity.

MBI is charged with providing financial support for providing broadband to underserved communities. The Comcast option will do neither of these. MBI failed to accurately count all underserved households; its conclusions are erroneous in this regard. The Comcast option would fail to overcome the established threshold as defined by "underserved". The Comcast proposal would provide cable to the least expensive "low hanging fruit" and leave 140 households in Montague without broadband.

MBI is charged with financially facilitating connectivity to the taxpayer funded fiber optic network. I apologize for stating the obvious: the increasingly obsolete copper cable is not the far superior fiber optics. By choosing the Comcast option, MBI fails in its charge and its obligation to the taxpayers who financed the fiber optic infrastructure. MBI fails in its reason for being.

In addition, as a result years of work by the Montague Broadband Committee, which includes professional expertise in the field of network design and connectivity, has recommended the fiber optic option. The Town of Montague officially expressed its desire for the fiber optic option. Its not a difficult conclusion. Choosing fiber optic over cable is like choosing the telephone over the telegraph.

The bottom line is that the fiber optic option will do far more, for more people, far into the future than the cable option. If the cable options is chosen, hundreds people will be stranded w/out broadband, an ever increasing necessity for every day life, academics, medical service, and economic development, and for sustaining home values.

Please help stop this incredulous decision.

Thank you,

Al Averill