April 28, 2021

Honorable Christopher L. Jacobs
203 Main Street, Suite 2
Williamsville, NY 14221

Dear Congressman Jacobs,

As the State Representatives representing Niagara and Orleans County, we would like to voice our support for the Niagara-Orleans Regional Alliance’s (NORA) effort to expand broadband access for the two counties. They are looking for $10.2 million in federal funding for the expansion of internet services.

As you are undoubtedly aware, the COVID-19 pandemic brought this gap to the forefront of everyday life. For many in Niagara and Orleans counties, internet quality is so poor that users lack the ability to access essential services such as working from home, job training, employment searches, remote education, and telehealth. NORA has engaged an Internet Service Provider, RTO Wireless, who has designed a two-county wide solution that will provide internet access at speeds from 25Mbs to 100Mbs and is “shovel ready.” They are a Microsoft Partner and estimates a complete buildout between six and nine months from the project start, provided a reasonable permitting process. Upon completion, RTO will maintain and operate the system.

COVID-19 has shown that there is a serious need for the expansion of broadband services in rural areas. For that reason, we fully support NORA’s project to expand broadband access in Niagara and Orleans County. Thank you for your time, and please do not hesitate to contact our offices if you have any questions.

Best Regards,

Rob Ort
State Senator, 62nd District

Steve Hawley
Assembly Member, 139th District
April 28, 2021

Hon. Christopher L. Jacobs
203 Main Street, Suite 2
Williamsville NY 14332

Dear Congressman Jacobs,

As the State Assembly Representative representing Niagara County, I would like to voice my support for the Niagara-Orleans Regional Alliance’s (NORA) effort to expand and provide broadband access for my constituents in the Niagara County area for the expansion of internet services.

As you are aware, the COVID-19 pandemic brought this gap to the frontline of everyday life for many people. Internet quality is so poor in some areas that users lack the ability to access essential services such as working from home, finding employment, job training, remote educational opportunities and telehealth. NORA has engaged an Internet Service Provider, RTO Wireless, who has designed a two-county wide solution that will provide internet access at speeds from 25Mbs to 100Mbs and is “shovel ready”. They are a Microsoft partner and estimate a complete buildout between six (6) and nine (9) months from the project start, provided a reasonable permitting process. Upon completion of this project, RTO will maintain and operate this system.

COVID-19 has proven that there is a serious need for the expansion of broadband services in rural areas and that is why we completely support NORA’s project to expand access in Niagara County.

Thank you for your time and please feel free to contact our office if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,

ANGELO J. MORINELLO,
Assemblyman, 145th District

AJM/cld
April 29, 2021

Hon. Chris Jacobs  
27th Congressional District  
8203 Main Street, Suite 2  
Williamsville, NY 14221

Re: Letter of Support USDA ReConnect Program

Dear Congressmen Jacobs,

The Orleans County Health Department has always worked diligently to provide health equity to our residents, however during the COVID-19 pandemic it has shown clearly the limitations and the disadvantage our rural county has experienced due to the lack of high-speed broadband access.

From testing to vaccination registration, the requirement of broadband access has limited residents’ access to these vital services in the COVID fight. This limited/no access to broadband has also affected our schools and the many families who did not have broadband access to provide equitable education during the many months of remote/hybrid learning.

We encourage and support Orleans County’s efforts to increase high-speed broadband to all of the residents of our county.

We thank you in advance for your efforts and support of this application.

Sincerely,

Paul A. Pettit, MSL  
Public Health Director

“Healthy People in a Healthy Community”
April 28, 2021

Hon Chris Jacobs,
8203 Main Street, Suite 2
Williamsville, NY 14221

Dear Congressman Jacobs:

As the State Assembly Representative for the 144th District which encompasses Niagara and Orleans Counties, I am writing to express my support for the Niagara-Orleans Regional Alliance’s (NORA) effort to expand broadband access for the two counties. I appreciate your consideration on this matter.

As you are aware, the Niagara-Orleans Regional Alliance (NORA) has long sought to expand access to reliable and affordable high-speed broadband access across these two counties in the most cost effective and efficient manner possible. Despite these efforts, the Niagara Orleans region continues to be underserved and its limited access to high speed internet keeps our community at an economic disadvantage.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought this gap to the frontline of everyday life. For many in Niagara and Orleans counties, the Internet quality (if they have Internet access) is so poor users lack the ability to access essential services such as working-from-home, job training and search, remote education, and telehealth. Not only does this pose a public safety threat, but it also inhibits our regional and local economies – contradicting any progress being exhibited in our region to revitalize and create high paying, lasting jobs.

We must continue to work together to ensure that residents of the Niagara Orleans region have a choice of reliable and affordable high-speed Internet. I appreciate your consideration on this matter, and I hope you will not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further assistance or answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Norris
Member of Assembly
144th District
To the USDA Rural Development Broadband ReConnect Program:


The many concerns with the Digital Divide have been exacerbated during the Covid-19 crisis. Numerous families in the Niagara and Orleans county areas have suffered from digital inequity in the following ways:

- A portion of the municipality, county, or region does not have broadband access for the families living in these areas, and therefore families cannot connect with broadband providers
- The broadband connectivity and access in the municipality, county, or region is accessible to some, but not others, due to the related costs of connectivity

We believe the utilizing funds to support Niagara Orleans Regional Alliance rural broadband initiative will help “Close the Digital Divide”. This is one of the many steps necessary to creating educational equity for our students in our ever-increasing technological society.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]

Jodee Riordan

President, Niagara-Oleans School Boards Association
November 3, 2020

USDA Rural Development Broadband Reconnect Program,

Please accept this letter of support from the Royalton-Hartland Central School District for the Niagara Orleans Regional Alliance rural broadband initiative. It is our hope you will utilize funding from the Rural Development Broadband Reconnect Program to help “Close the Digital Divide”.

The many concerns with the Digital Divide have been exacerbated during the Covid-19 crisis. Numerous families in the Orleans/Niagara BOCES area have suffered from digital inequity in the following ways:

- A portion of the municipality, county, or region does not have broadband access for the families living in these areas, and therefore families cannot connect with broadband providers;
- The broadband connectivity and access in the municipality, county, or region is accessible to some, but not others, due to the related costs of connectivity

We believe the utilizing funds to support Niagara Orleans Regional Alliance rural broadband initiative will help “Close the Digital Divide”. This is one of the many steps necessary to creating educational equity for our students in our ever-increasing technological society.

Sincerely,

Dr. Hank Stopinski
Superintendent of Schools
November 3, 2020

USDA Rural Development Broadband Reconnect Program,

Please accept this letter of support from the Wilson Central School District for the Niagara Orleans Regional Alliance rural broadband initiative. It is our hope you will utilize funding from the Rural Development Broadband Reconnect Program to help “Close the Digital Divide”.

The many concerns with the Digital Divide have been exacerbated during the Covid-19 crisis. Numerous families in the Orleans/Niagara BOCES area have suffered from digital inequity in the following ways:

- A portion of the municipality, county, or region does not have broadband access for the families living in these areas, and therefore families cannot connect with broadband providers
- The broadband connectivity and access in the municipality, county, or region is accessible to some, but not others, due to the related costs of connectivity

We believe the utilizing funds to support Niagara Orleans Regional Alliance rural broadband initiative will help “Close the Digital Divide”. This is one of the many steps necessary to creating educational equity for our students in our ever-increasing technological society.

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy P. Carter
Superintendent of Schools

TPC/jp
U. S. Department of Agriculture
Rural Development Broadband Reconnect Program:

Please accept this letter of support from the Newfane Central School District for the Niagara Orleans Regional Alliance rural broadband initiative. It is our hope you will utilize funding from the Rural Development Broadband Reconnect Program to help “Close the Digital Divide”.

The many concerns with the Digital Divide have been exacerbated during the Covid-19 crisis. Numerous families in the Orleans/Niagara BOCES area have suffered from digital inequity in the following ways:

- A significant portion of the Orleans/Niagara BOCES region does not have broadband access for the families living in these areas, and therefore families cannot connect with broadband providers.
- The broadband connectivity and access in the Orleans/Niagara BOCES region is accessible to some, but not others, due to the related costs of connectivity.

We believe the utilizing funds to support Niagara Orleans Regional Alliance rural broadband initiative will help “Close the Digital Divide”. This is one of the many steps necessary to creating educational equity for our students in our ever-increasing technological society.

We greatly appreciate any assistance you can provide in supporting this initiative.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Baumann
Superintendent
Newfane Central School District
November 4, 2020

Please accept this letter of support from the Starpoint Central School District for the Niagara Orleans Regional Alliance rural broadband initiative. It is our hope you will utilize funding from the Rural Development Broadband Reconnect Program to help “Close the Digital Divide”.

The many concerns with the Digital Divide have been exacerbated during the Covid-19 crisis. Numerous families in the Orleans/Niagara BOCES area have suffered from digital inequity in the following ways:

- A portion of the municipality, county, or region does not have broadband access for the families living in these areas, and therefore families cannot connect with broadband providers
- The broadband connectivity and access in the municipality, county, or region is accessible to some, but not others, due to the related costs of connectivity

We believe the utilizing funds to support Niagara Orleans Regional Alliance rural broadband initiative will help “Close the Digital Divide”. This is one of the many steps necessary to creating educational equity for our students in our ever-increasing technological society.

Respectfully Submitted,

[Signature]

Dr. Sean M. Croft
Superintendent of Schools
USDA Rural Development Broadband Reconnect Program,

Please accept this letter of support from the Lyndonville Central School District for the Niagara Orleans Regional Alliance rural broadband initiative. It is our hope you will utilize funding from the Rural Development Broadband Reconnect Program to help “Close the Digital Divide”.

The many concerns with the Digital Divide have been exacerbated during the Covid-19 crisis. Numerous families in the Orleans/Niagara BOCES area have suffered from digital inequity in the following ways:

- A portion of the municipality, county, or region does not have broadband access for the families living in these areas, and therefore families cannot connect with broadband providers
- The broadband connectivity and access in the municipality, county, or region is accessible to some, but not others, due to the related costs of connectivity

We believe the utilizing funds to support Niagara Orleans Regional Alliance rural broadband initiative will help “Close the Digital Divide”. This is one of the many steps necessary to creating educational equity for our students in our ever-increasing technological society.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason A. Smith
Superintendent of Schools

11/5/20
November 3, 2020

USDA Rural Development Broadband Reconnect Program,

Please accept this letter of support from the Lockport City School District for the Niagara Orleans Regional Alliance rural broadband initiative. It is our hope you will utilize funding from the Rural Development Broadband Reconnect Program to help "Close the Digital Divide".

The many concerns with the Digital Divide have been exacerbated during the Covid-19 crisis. Numerous families in the Orleans/Niagara BOCES area have suffered from digital inequity in the following ways:

- A portion of the municipality, county, or region does not have broadband access for the families living in these areas, and therefore, families cannot connect with broadband providers
- The broadband connectivity and access in the municipality, county, or region is accessible to some, but not others, due to the related costs of connectivity

We believe the utilizing funds to support Niagara Orleans Regional Alliance rural broadband initiative will help "Close the Digital Divide". This is one of the many steps necessary to creating educational equity for our students in our ever-increasing technological society.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]

Michelle T. Bradley
Superintendent
Lockport City School District

"Pride in Our Past; Faith in Our Future"

We believe: All people can learn. Schools create conditions for success: academically, socially, emotionally, physically and aesthetically.
Teaching and learning are the shared responsibility of home, school and community.
Our mission is to assure comprehensive learning for all so that each person will be a lifelong learner.
11/3/2020

USDA Rural Development Broadband Reconnect Program,

Please accept this letter of support from the Barker Central School District for the Niagara Orleans Regional Alliance rural broadband initiative. It is our hope you will utilize funding from the Rural Development Broadband Reconnect Program to help “Close the Digital Divide”.

The many concerns with the Digital Divide have been exacerbated during the Covid-19 crisis. Numerous families in the Orleans/Niagara BOCES area have suffered from digital inequity in the following ways:

- A portion of the municipality, county, or region does not have broadband access for the families living in these areas, and therefore families cannot connect with broadband providers
- The broadband connectivity and access in the municipality, county, or region is accessible to some, but not others, due to the related costs of connectivity

We believe the utilizing funds to support Niagara Orleans Regional Alliance rural broadband initiative will help “Close the Digital Divide”. This is one of the many steps necessary to creating educational equity for our students in our ever-increasing technological society.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacob L. Reimer
Superintendent
November 3, 2020

USDA Rural Development Broadband Reconnect Program,

Please accept this letter of support from the Niagara Wheatfield Central School District for the Niagara Orleans Regional Alliance rural broadband initiative. It is our hope you will utilize funding from the Rural Development Broadband Reconnect Program to help “Close the Digital Divide”.

The many concerns with the Digital Divide have been exacerbated during the Covid-19 crisis. Numerous families in the Orleans/Niagara BOCES area have suffered from digital inequity in the following ways:

- A portion of the municipality, county, or region does not have broadband access for the families living in these areas, and therefore families cannot connect with broadband providers
- The broadband connectivity and access in the municipality, county, or region is accessible to some, but not others, due to the related costs of connectivity

We believe the utilizing funds to support Niagara Orleans Regional Alliance rural broadband initiative will help “Close the Digital Divide”. This is one of the many steps necessary to creating educational equity for our students in our ever-increasing technological society.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel G. Ljiljanich
Superintendent
April 28, 2021

Honorable Christopher L. Jacobs
203 Main Street, Suite 2
Williamsville, NY 14221

Dear Congressman Jacobs:

I am writing on behalf of the Orleans County Office of Emergency Management respectfully requesting your assistance in funding for the USDA ReConnect program.

With the greater emphasis being placed on training for our volunteer fire and EMS personnel, county, federal and state training for county employees, it is imperative that high speed broadband is available to all our first responders and employees in Orleans County.

During the Covid-19 pandemic many zoom meetings were held to continue with our Orleans County Fire Advisory Board, Orleans County Fire Chiefs Association and Orleans County EMS Council meetings. With the inefficiency, or lack of, high-speed broadband in numerous areas in the county, many individuals working from home had a difficult time to remote in for training and vital Covid-19 briefings.

If you have any questions or concerns, I can be reached at (585) 589-4414. I appreciate any possible support in this request and thank you in advance for your past efforts in assisting our office and county.

Sincerely,

H. Dale Banker
Orleans County Director of Emergency Management, Fire Coordinator

Cc: Orleans County Legislature Chairman Johnson
    Orleans County Legislators
    CAO Welch