



## The Washington Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors

Carole Washburn  
Executive Secretary  
Washington Utilities and  
Transportation Commission  
P.O. Box 47250  
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

Re: Docket No. UT-070986

On behalf of the Washington Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (WATOA), I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Broadband Survey. WATOA and its member cities, counties, and public utility districts strongly support universal and affordable access to broadband. We believe that broadband availability and competition in the telecommunications marketplace are essential to keeping Washington and its citizens in the technological vanguard.

In developing a survey on broadband availability, we believe it is key to define broadband. We share the comments by the CWA and AT&T that the FCC definition of 200 kbps is woefully out of date for the kinds of data transmission needed to secure our future. We concur that for the purposes of this study, broadband should be defined, at a minimum, as 2mbps downstream and 1mbps up.

Ultimately, we believe that the survey should examine both the provider side and the user side. For providers, the UTC should obtain from all providers brochures and maps indicating their service territories, offerings, prices, and speeds. WATOA member jurisdictions with franchised cable providers have maps and publications documenting the above information and we would work with our members to make this information available to the UTC.

For the consumer side of the equation, critical questions to ask are:

- Do you have broadband service?
- If so, what level of service (speed) do you have and who provides it?
- What do you pay?
- If you do not have service, why not? Is it unavailable or not affordable? You may also wish to ask what they'd be willing to pay, to give providers a sense of the market and potential profitability.
- What content do you want to be able to access through broadband?

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Obtaining a complete picture of all of Washington's diverse population is both imperative and problematic. WATOA urges the UTC to ensure that the survey sample hard to reach populations, including seniors, non-English speakers, rural populations and inner city residents. We believe the UTC should look at least as fine grained as the zip code level to ensure that all regions and populations are sampled.

WATOA strongly supports the UTC's survey and will provide whatever assistance we can. We believe that true broadband – in the range of 100mbps symmetric -- should be our ultimate goal. These speeds are essential to guarantee Washingtonians a strong base for economic development and job retention; distance learning; and telemedicine, for example. Determining the state of broadband is the essential first step in developing a policy to ensure that our state, its residents, businesses, and institutions have the tools needed to meet the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jill Novik". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jill Novik  
2007 WATOA President