

Title **0076** 09/29/2022

by **Becki Regier** in **Capital Projects Fund (CPF)** id. 32689501
Broadband Infrastructure Program: Phase Two
Applicant Response Form

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I am providing response comments related to the following application (choose one): **HomeCommunications_Lehigh_1**

I am responding to the concern that this project: **Other**

Please describe: **Federally Funded Area**

Please provide your response to the public comments received in the text box below: **Response to Public Comment - #0262**
Home Communications, Inc. (HCI), contends that AMG's challenge to HCI's application to provide fiber-to-the-home services to the City of Lehigh and its rural areas threatens to undermine this community's opportunity to get true high-speed internet while potentially stranding some customers completely.

HCI's CPF application is to provide fiber capable of 10 Gbps symmetrical to all locations contained in their application. The 10 Gbps internet service would be available to all locations in the application regardless of distance, line-of-sight or the number of subscribers using the network at any given time. Although AMG has a CAF obligation to serve some of this proposed area with 25/3 internet in addition to their RDOF obligation to serve other parts of the proposed area with 1 Gig/500 Megs, AMG is proposing to utilize Fixed Wireless technology which is a "best-effort" service that lacks the standards necessary to truly fulfill their obligations.

Unlike fiber, fixed wireless relies on maintaining line-of-sight between towers and end-user radios. This means that locations that cannot achieve line-of-sight due to trees, weather or topography cannot get internet service. The obligations under both CAF II and RDOF are to serve all locations within an awarded area, not just the ones that can receive a transmission signal. Allowing AMG to block HCI's application that commits to serving 100% of the locations in the application with a proven technology, risks permanently stranding locations that do not have a business case to serve without a grant.

In addition to line-of-sight issues prohibiting the delivery of broadband to certain locations, fixed wireless technology is also greatly impacted by distance. The farther a subscriber is from the tower, the less speed and higher latency that customer will experience, which may even lead to a customer not having the ability to receive any service at all. The speeds committed to in HCI's application can be delivered to all proposed applications regardless of distance.

Ignoring distance and line-of-sight issues that may completely prohibit locations from receiving broadband over fixed wireless, the customers receiving fixed wireless broadband may not be able to achieve the 100/20 speeds AMG is using as the basis for their challenge due to tower capacity limitations. With optimal conditions and low tower subscription, fixed wireless has been shown to provide speeds of 100/20, however as AMG adds more subscribers to their towers, the speeds delivered will decrease. This will be especially pronounced during critical peak hours when more subscribers are utilizing their broadband connections. Based on our market research AMG has a very limited number of customers in the areas they are claiming service. Their limited number of customers have allowed them to show more robust speeds, however with the limited number of customers they currently have, these tests are akin more to field trials than proving realistic usage on a commercially viable tower. Using fiber in HCI's current service area, they have continued to increase the speeds available and delivered to their customers. AMG's service will likely decline over time as more customers are added to their network.

Currently AMG is advertising their 100/20 internet service at \$139.95, which is far above the FCC's Affordability Benchmark of \$105.68. This also greatly exceeds the price HCI would be offering similar

speeds to the proposed area. In addition to this price being excessively high, it seems this may also be a purposeful tactic to keep network usage low to ensure 100/20 for any future speed testing. HCI views high subscriber usage as proof of the value their fiber investments are bringing to rural Kansas, not as a technical bottleneck.

While fixed wireless technology may have its place in serving rural Kansas, its usage to serve areas where a fiber provider is willing to serve seems contrary to the goal to provide fast, future-proof internet to all locations. HCI contends that honoring AMG's challenge could potentially strand rural customers while delivering substandard internet to the remaining. HCI asks the Broadband Board to strongly reject AMG's challenge.

Please provide supporting documents relative to your comments. Please submit multiple files as a ZIP file.

n/a

Becki Regier 9-29-22

By submitting this form for public comment and evidence to support your comment, you are accepting responsibility for the accuracy of the information submitted and that it is true and correct to the best of your knowledge. You agree to be contacted by the Kansas Office of Broadband Development, Kansas Department of Commerce should the need arise. Furthermore, by making this submission, you understand that Kansas Department of Commerce and the Office of Broadband Development reserve the right to publicly publish your comment and evidence provided. Falsification of information will result in rejection of future public comment submissions and could result legal action. Please type your name and today's date in the text box below.
