

Strategic Broadband Plan Public Comments

Name	E-Mail	URL	Comment	Affiliation	Section
Sean Trahan	Sean.Trahan@gmail.com		<p>Mr. Lindley,</p> <p>I wanted to thank you for publishing the document titled "Developing Broadband in Maine Strategic Plan" for public review and comments. I spent considerable time reading and reviewing the document and found several points in the document insightful, very forward thinking and then other points of the document that, due to lack of understanding or lack of data confusing.</p> <p>I believe the strategic plan about supporting a backbone through Maine to New Brunswick is a great idea, in that it will place Maine in the middle of the infrastructure that would link the US with Europe. I am also a firm believer in anything education, the more education that can be given to the children of the state, the better off the state overall will be. If one looks at the way that Microsoft targeted their product many years ago, they focused on education of the students to use their products. Thus releasing to the workforce droves of people that were familiar with their products and ensuring that businesses for many years to come would be "hooked" perse on the Microsoft platform. Healthcare is another avenue that I believe the expansion of broadband services would help benefit, as healthcare costs continue to rise in the future and funding from the national and state levels will decrease due to limited resources; any cost cutting measure should be embraced. Government services, again a win win situation for the constituents and the government itself, the ability to do many tasks online, register ones vehicle, pay property taxes, license a dog even benefits the population in that having to keep to limited hours to be "legal" is not a requirement. Finally one aspect of the document that is outstanding is the focus on the shift of the universal service fund to just not be focused on the phone service. As noted in the document the reality is that landline phone service is phasing out as more and more people move to cell service as a primary mode of phone service.</p> <p>The one aspect to the plan that I personally found hard to wrap my arms around was the section regarding the survey results, and some of the conclusions drawn from those results. Without seeing the raw data I am led to believe that adequate sampling was done on a state wide basis to get a true "idea" of the feelings of the population. I find it hard to believe that citizens do not find value in services relating to broadband, watching the news, television in general, and even ads on TV, in newspapers, magazines and the like point to / hint at a world out there where technology can provide great benefit. The concept of a digital divide focuses not so much at the education or knowledge of "what is there", rather the availability. In reading the document and my understanding of the results, the spending funding on an awareness campaign for businesses and the general population would seem a fruitless effort. If a business at this point of time sees no need for broadband, then there is a need to review business models.</p> <p>If any type of awareness campaign is to be done it should be focused on the leaders of rural communities where broadband service is non-existent or very limited. Case in point is the town of Orrington Maine where recently I just finished a grant request and was approved for the expansion of services. It took 5 years to get through the red tape and past the leadership of the town to finally get services expanded. The town manager made the comment to me one day that lack of basic infrastructure such as broad band is what you get for living in Maine. No one at the municipal level even knew of the ConnectME Authority and its grant process. More disturbing, the town manager outlined that he had no interest in expanding services in the area, as it would cost him too much time and money. This was due to ignorance of the programs available. In my process of getting the grant done for Orrington, I went door to door to get signatures for expansion; I found that all but one person was interested in the services.</p> <p>It was at the town level that the expansion of services was being hindered not at the individual level. This town level barrier was also being enabled through the types of contracts that were being signed with cable providers.</p> <p>In conclusion, I believe the document is a very well thought out document and brings to light many issues that face the Maine economy today and in the future. These issues are not only technology related issues such as pure connectivity problems but social issues such as education and awareness. The ConnectME Authority should focus on a goal of ensuring adequate service can be implemented within the state for future needs, no one in the state should be left unable to "plug in" and get adequate service to their home if they desire. The concept of "build it they will come" should be the motto to move forward.</p> <p>Thank you</p>	Resident Town of Orrington	Overall

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Ramsey Ludlow	ludlowr@maine.com		<p>I am so grateful that this effort is underway. I live in Hartford, ME. My ISP is Oxford Networks- and there is no possibility of competition, I am told. Currently, I can receive DSL I am about 3 miles from rt 219 and 140)- but no faster than 1.17 download speed (barely high enough for streaming video) . In addition, one must buy landline phone service from Oxford Networks in order to receive DSL service, therefore I cannot lower my bill by dropping my land line and using my cell phone exclusively, despite the fact that I hardly ever use my land line. I connect with the world almost exclusively through internet first, and cell phone secondarily.</p> <p>There are several people in the area who have in-home small businesses and absolutely rely on the service they get from Oxford Networks- but as there is no other provider, there is no possibility of getting a faster connection- and some cannot get DSL.</p> <p>I and others in this rural area would benefit greatly from faster than tier 1 broadband.</p> <p>Thanks for your efforts to improve connectivity in Maine, Ramsey Ludlow</p>	retired teacher	