

April 26, 2023

Laurel Leverrier, Assistant Administrator
Telecommunications Program, Rural Utilities Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Stop 1510, Rm 4212-S
1400 Independence Ave., SW Washington, DC 20250-1510

Dear Ms. Leverrier,

The Yachats City Council is in support of Pioneer Connects application for funding under the USDA's Community Connect Grant Program to extend its fiber network south of Yachats. This will provide improved service to our extended community.

This project will bring fiber-to-the home to rural unincorporated areas of Lincoln and Lane Counties. These communities lack full internet service which affects their business and personal access to the internet. Improved service will enhance the capability of this tourist-dependent area to attract visitors. Families in this area, many with less than average income, will greatly benefit from improved Internet connections for remote learning, remote work opportunities, and other purposes. This will be especially important for the rental properties and multiple Bed and Breakfasts in this area as they can provide a competitive experience for their customers who must compete with businesses in Yachats that have this level of service. These businesses bring visitors to Yachats, itself a small city of 1000, to shop and eat in our restaurants.

Pioneer Connect has served this area for seventy years when there were no options. A copper-wire DSL network serves this area, but copper wire internet speeds are limited given the sparsely populated rural areas due to the technology's technical limitations. A fiber-to-the-home network in the area south of Yachats will provide customers with much higher connectivity. Pioneer Connect appears to be the only entity willing to provide this high-speed access. Without Pioneer Connect, it is unlikely that these homes and businesses will receive the connection speed to thrive and compete in today's world. Additionally, this project will allow Pioneer Connect to offer fiber-to-the-home, at some future point, to provide Yachats's residents with a high-speed dedicated connection competitor to our current service provider.

The city of Yachats believes that service to areas south of our city addresses the objectives of the Community Connect Grant Program. We endorse this application and support full funding.

Craig Berdie

Mayor, City of Yachats