



State of New Mexico

Susana Martinez
Governor

October 25, 2016

Mr. Chris Henderson, CEO
Universal Service Administrative Company
School and Libraries Program
700 12th Street NW, Suite 900
Washington, D.C. 20005

via Email: Chris.Henderson@usac.org

Dear Mr. Henderson:

I offer my strong support for the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) to issue, with expediency, the funding commitment decision letters to the schools and libraries for the E-rate program for New Mexico.

In October 2015, I announced that high-speed internet access for K-12 public schools in New Mexico is a priority. To take advantage of E-rate modernization's special construction opportunities, New Mexico established a matching fund for new fiber construction. Last spring thirteen districts submitted a form 471 for fiber construction, and due to this effort, over forty schools plan to realize faster online connections at a more affordable rate. The students in these schools will finally have the bandwidth they need for digital learning resulting in a world of educational opportunity.

However, because the funding decision has stalled, these students will likely endure another school year with slow speeds and spotty internet connections. Originally, the reimbursement and state match would have covered over ninety-percent of the new construction costs, and was expected to come prior to the start of the 2016-2017 school year.

As you know, fiber construction is complicated and our school districts are hesitant to invest in a federal program that may not deliver on its promises. As a result of USAC failing to reimburse our state public schools and libraries in a timely manner, progress has been delayed in connecting more New Mexico students to faster internet speeds. I urge USAC to act quickly and make a funding decision so that the promise of fiber connectivity can be realized as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Martinez".
Governor Susana Martinez