



February 12, 2021

VIA EMAIL

Universal Broadband Fund
Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada
235 Queen St.
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H5

To Whom It May Concern,

RE: Region of Durham application to the Universal Broadband Fund

The Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade, Oshawa Chamber of Commerce and Whitby Chamber of Commerce collectively submit this letter in support of the Region of Durham's application to the Universal Broadband Fund for the establishment of a Regional Broadband Network.

Society, and the global economy, is increasingly digital and online. The move to online delivery of services, including small business e-commerce, was accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Durham has many communities, particularly in our rural areas, which have poor internet service. There has been inadequate investment in these areas by Internet Service Providers (ISPs) because of the high cost of installing the infrastructure. The proposed Regional Broadband Network will address these concerns by extending high-speed fibre optic cables into our underserved areas. Without the cost of building the long backbone network, ISPs can focus on building quality high-speed networks inside our rural communities to deliver faster, more reliable internet service to allow residents and businesses to participate in the digital economy.

The joint boards and chambers represented here are the voice of small business across urban and parts of rural Durham Region. We represent every sector of the local economy including businesses of every size from sole proprietorships to large corporations. We support this application because we share the vision for the Regional Broadband Network that will ensure our business community has access to reliable broadband across the region. We consistently hear from our business communities that the quality and access to appropriate internet service is a barrier to effective business operations. We have seen members try to grow their business with only the use of mobile wireless service, incurring hundreds and thousands of dollars in additional charges. For businesses in our communities to continue to grow and compete on a global level, broadband infrastructure is a critical requirement.

Our focus is on business retention, expansion and attraction and our business community relies on reliable broadband to continue to achieve growth. We have strong relationships with the business community in Durham Region and can support this project through data sharing and bridging communication.



Should you have any questions about our support for this project, please contact us for additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicole Gibson".

Nicole Gibson

Executive Director, Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade

NGibson@apboardoftrade.com

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Shaw".

Nancy Shaw

CEO, Oshawa Chamber of Commerce

Nshaw@oshawachamber.com

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Corette Miller".

Corette Miller

President, Board of Directors, Whitby Chamber of Commerce