

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity
Office of Broadband
107 E. Madison Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

4/4/2023

Dear Sir/Madam:

I write to you in support of IBT's application for the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity's Office of Broadband's Capital Projects Fund in Alachua County. IBT's proposal provides a future-proof, Gigabit network with the ability to scale up to 10 GIGs, providing residents with reliable and secure service.

In High Springs, IBT's application will bring high speed internet service to about 1,300 unserved and extremely unserved households and businesses in our community. Their project involves roughly 80 route miles of underground fiber, building a robust and resilient Fiber-To-The-Home network, in areas which currently only have satellite and DSL options available at speeds < 25/3 Mbps.

In Hawthorne, IBT's application will bring high speed internet service to about 1,500 unserved and extremely unserved households and businesses in our community. Their project involves roughly 100 route miles of underground fiber, building a robust and resilient Fiber-To-The-Home network, in areas which currently only have satellite and DSL options available at speeds < 25/3 Mbps. This project targets all of the unserved and extremely unserved households and businesses within the largest Qualified Opportunity Zone Census Tract in our county.

Additionally, IBT has affordability programs that make their services cost-effective for low-income families here in Alachua County. When IBT's low-cost program is combined with the Affordable Connectivity Program and Lifeline, eligible residents can receive 100/100 Mbps symmetrical service for under \$20 per month.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted how lack of access to Broadband Internet Services impacted all aspects of the life for our residents, including preventing and affecting their ability to participate and take advantage of teleworking, telemedicine, and e-learning. IBT's proposed projects will go a long way to addressing the critical broadband needs of our residents and closing the digital divide in Alachua County.

In conclusion, I endorse IBT's efforts and strongly urge your support of this application which will take a meaningful step in closing the digital divide in Alachua County and have significant positive impacts for years to come.

Sincerely,