

**From:** "karen@lamoilleconomy.org%inter2" <karen@lamoilleconomy.org>  
**Subject:** Farm Bill 2007 Official Comments - 10/27/2005 02:37 PM CDT  
**Date Sent:** 10/27/2005 02:37:59 CDT  
**Date Received:** 10/27/2005 02:40:08 CDT

---

Email: karen@lamoilleconomy.org

FirstName: Karen

LastName: Lynch

Address1: PO Box 455

Address2: 43 Portland Street

City: Morrisville

State: Vermont

zipcode: 05661

Question1:

Question2: Testimony prepared for USDA Farm Bill Listening Session

Burlington, VT

October 26, 2005

### Why Broadband Matters

I am here to speak to the relationship of economic development in rural areas and the need for extended broadband service.

It is true that there are many broadband applications that are as yet blue sky visions. I want to focus today on benefits of broadband that are real now and I want to be very specific. Interconnected though they may be, I can count five.

? Access to information

? Access to markets

? Personal productivity

? Access to economic opportunity (jobs and entrepreneurship)

? Community

Access to information. With broadband, pages load faster and the user can process more information. Sometimes the most interesting information is buried on the fifteenth page of the Google search, and the dial-up internet user is unlikely to get there. Large files including graphics may not download at all over dial-up lines. Access to information in the agricultural arena includes commodity prices, information about weather and other factors influencing commodity markets, techniques for dealing with plant or animal disease, benchmarking information to allow farmers to improve their methods, and more. We want our farmers and other rural residents to have this advantage. Without broadband, they are at competitive disadvantage. The dial-up user has advantages relative to the person who has no internet access, but is at a disadvantage relative to the broadband user.

Access to markets. In addition to information about markets, the internet opens up new markets. Farmers can sell their products on a commodity basis or they can launch into value added markets, such as processed foods or even agri-tourism. The world is the market via the internet, but broadband connections bring it close to home.

Personal productivity. For farm or home business, on-line sourcing puts a world of inventory a couple of days away. Computer software updates are more and more distributed by download; dialup users often give up when they see download times that are hours, not the minutes or seconds experienced by broadband users. And frequent technology users change behavior to become more productive, including greater use of e-mail.

E-mail is more efficient than phone calls for simple messages because each person can work at the most convenient time. I routinely respond to and create 40-80 e-mails a day?if I had to do the same number of messages by phone, it would double my work day?assuming I got everyone on the line the first try.

Access to economic opportunity (jobs and entrepreneurship). Today, it is possible to work from home doing a wide variety of tasks if you have a broadband connection?high speed and always on. The options expand every day. Telecommuting to urban companies is one alternative that can offer well-paid employment to one family member while others work in the rural setting. More and more technology-driven opportunities exist for rural-based entrepreneurship, but it is broadband that makes those opportunities reality. Compared to other infrastructure investments?roads, sewers, industrial parks?broadband infrastructure is a low cost economic development tool, which leverages existing physical infrastructure.

Community. While many may not see community as a driver of the decision to invest in broadband, my experience is that the online community is alive, well and extraordinary. As the number of farms shrink, our access to like-minded people grows when we can stop at the computer and visit sites such as [www.TractorByNet](http://www.TractorByNet), which covers not only how great is my new tractor, but also what penny-saving recipes have come to light, what alternative energy sources are becoming viable, what advances in healthcare tell us about daily diet choices, and so on and so on.

For all these reasons, broadband is important. But somehow we have found ourselves in a situation where broadband and its benefits are available primarily in population centers. Historically, we have relied on private enterprise to finance our communications networks and the decisions about what technology to make available to whom have been driven by marginal economic returns, with the result that broadband and its benefits are available primarily in population centers. This needs to change. We need a broader vision. We need a vision that says that it is a public good for broadband technology to be available to all?or most?Americans, because creativity and innovation are not restricted to cities.

I commend USDA for its creative and effective Community Connect program, but at nine million dollars a year, it is too small compared to what is needed. I commend the broadband loan program as well, but am concerned by the low utilization of the program. The private sector is as yet undercapitalized and under-staffed to drive the information-based technology transformation that many of us see on the horizon.

Why do we need broadband in rural areas? Because we live in rural areas. Because we have citizens in rural areas who contribute to the economic and community well being of America, and those citizens need to be empowered at the same level as urban citizens.

We rely on government for vision?in this instance a vision that encompasses physical broadband infrastructure, dynamic public-private partnerships to operate that infrastructure, and broad-based technology education to lift American residents?rural and urban?to a new level of creativity, innovation, and productivity. Our future economy depends on this vision and its execution.

Thank you.

Karen Temple Lynch  
Executive Director  
Lamoille Economic Development Corp.  
PO Box 455 / 43 Portland Street  
Morrisville, VT 05661  
(802) 888-5640

Question3:

Question4:

Question5: Testimony prepared for USDA Farm Bill Listening Session  
Burlington, VT  
October 26, 2005

## Why Broadband Matters

I am here to speak to the relationship of economic development in rural areas and the need for extended broadband service.

It is true that there are many broadband applications that are as yet blue sky visions. I want to focus today on benefits of broadband that are real now and I want to be very specific. Interconnected though they may be, I can count five.

? Access to information

? Access to markets

? Personal productivity

? Access to economic opportunity (jobs and entrepreneurship)

? Community

Access to information. With broadband, pages load faster and the user can process more information. Sometimes the most interesting information is buried on the fifteenth page of the Google search, and the dial-up internet user is unlikely to get there. Large files including graphics may not download at all over dial-up lines. Access to information in the agricultural arena includes commodity prices, information about weather and other factors influencing commodity markets, techniques for dealing with plant or animal disease, benchmarking information to allow farmers to improve their methods, and more. We want our farmers and other rural residents to have this advantage. Without broadband, they are at competitive disadvantage. The dial-up user has advantages relative to the person who has no internet access, but is at a disadvantage relative to the broadband user.

Access to markets. In addition to information about markets, the internet opens up new markets. Farmers can sell their products on a commodity basis or they can launch into value added markets, such as processed foods or even agri-tourism. The world is the market via the internet, but broadband connections bring it close to home.

Personal productivity. For farm or home business, on-line sourcing puts a world of inventory a couple of days away. Computer software updates are more and more distributed by download; dialup users often give up when they see download times that are hours, not the minutes or seconds experienced by broadband users. And frequent technology users change behavior to become more productive, including greater use of e-mail. E-mail is more efficient than phone calls for simple messages because each person can work at the most convenient time. I routinely respond to and create 40-80 e-mails a day?if I had to do the same number of messages by phone, it would double my work day?assuming I got everyone on the line the first try.

Access to economic opportunity (jobs and entrepreneurship). Today, it is possible to work from home doing a wide variety of tasks if you have a broadband connection?high speed and always on. The options expand every day. Telecommuting to urban companies is one alternative that can offer well-paid employment to one family member while others work in the rural setting. More and more technology-driven opportunities exist for rural-based entrepreneurship, but it is broadband that makes those opportunities reality. Compared to other infrastructure investments?roads, sewers, industrial parks?broadband infrastructure is a low cost economic development tool, which leverages existing physical infrastructure.

Community. While many may not see community as a driver of the decision to invest in broadband, my experience is that the online community is alive, well and extraordinary. As the number of farms shrink, our access to like-minded people grows when we can stop at the computer and visit sites such as [www.TractorByNet](http://www.TractorByNet), which covers not only how great is my new tractor, but also what penny-saving recipes have come to light, what alternative energy sources are becoming viable, what advances in healthcare tell us about daily diet choices, and so on and so on.

For all these reasons, broadband is important. But somehow we have found ourselves in a situation where broadband and its benefits are available primarily in population centers. Historically, we have relied on private enterprise to finance our communications networks and the decisions about what technology to make available to whom have been driven by marginal economic returns, with the result that broadband and its benefits are available primarily in population centers. This needs to change. We need a broader vision. We need a vision that says that it is a public good for broadband technology to be available to all?or most?Americans, because creativity and innovation are not restricted to cities.

I commend USDA for its creative and effective Community Connect program, but at nine million dollars a year, it is too small compared to what is needed. I commend the broadband loan program as well, but am concerned by the low utilization of the program. The private sector is as yet undercapitalized and under-staffed to drive the information-based technology transformation that many of us see on the horizon.

Why do we need broadband in rural areas? Because we live in rural areas. Because we have citizens in rural areas who contribute to the economic and community well being of America, and those citizens need to be empowered at the same level as urban citizens.

We rely on government for vision?in this instance a vision that encompasses physical broadband infrastructure, dynamic public-private partnerships to operate that infrastructure, and broad-based technology education to lift American residents?rural and urban?to a new level of creativity, innovation, and productivity. Our future economy depends on this vision and its execution.

Thank you.

Karen Temple Lynch  
Executive Director  
Lamoille Economic Development Corp.  
PO Box 455 / 43 Portland Street  
Morrisville, VT 05661

(802) 888-5640

Question6: