



## Town of Middlefield Selectboard

P.O. Box 238, Middlefield, MA 01243

**Date:** November 10, 2014

**Subject:** Wireless broadband pilot for the Town of Middlefield

**To:** Philip Holahan, MBI Interim Director

The Selectboard of the Town of Middlefield understands that the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) may implement a pilot project to test the feasibility of last mile wireless broadband service in our town, at no cost to Middlefield taxpayers.

Please be advised that we strongly support such a pilot, and will be happy to assist MBI in its implementation. We feel that Middlefield will be an ideal location from which to conduct such a wireless broadband test, as our 520 residents are dispersed over 24 sq. mi. of steep, wooded terrain, ranging in elevation from 733-2,002 feet.

The people of our town are frustrated by the continuing lack of adequate internet access. Only 74% of our houses are within reach of low-capacity Verizon DSL service, and new subscribers are being turned away now that there are no more available ports in the two Verizon DSLAMs.

Wireless technology is evolving rapidly, so while earlier implementations wireless of broadband service in our region have met with limited success, MBI would be remiss not to conduct a pilot using latest available technology.

We are also deeply concerned with the high cost of the current plan to run fiber to every home, as our town is sparsely populated, spread out along over 38 miles of roads. We are being asked to commit the borrowing authority of our town to additional funding on the order of \$50 million to underwrite the cost of bringing fiber to underserved towns in the MBI service area. As our tax rate already stands at \$17.42 per \$1,000, we strongly urge MBI to explore wireless alternatives that could be fully funded out of the \$50 million already committed to broadband by the state.

We look forward to working with MBI on the wireless broadband pilot.

Sincerely,

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Alan Vint, Chair

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Howard Knickerbocker, Selectman

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David Dinicola, Selectman