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THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



ROBERT G. ORTT
SENATOR, 62ND DISTRICT

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May 2, 2018

Senator Terrance Murphy, Chairman
Senate Committee on Investigations and Government Operations
Legislative Office Building Room 817
Albany, NY 12247

Re: Request for Investigation into New York State Broadband Program Office

Dear Senator Murphy:

I am writing to request that the Senate Committee on Investigations and Government Operations conducts a formal investigation into the New York State Broadband Program Office. The Broadband Program has not achieved its stated goals, and the public deserves to know why.

In the FY2015-2016 Capital Projects budget, the Legislature included \$500 million for the "New NY Broadband Initiative." Legislators voted for this proposal with the understanding that the funding would provide high-speed broadband to every household in New York.

In addition to funding from the New York State budget, we were highly encouraged to receive an extra \$170 million in funding from the Federal Communication Commission's Connect America Fund.

If you've been listening to the Governor, you'd believe this program has been a massive success. The Governor has travelled the state claiming that he's met his goal of delivering high-speed internet to every New Yorker. Perhaps he's misinformed – or perhaps he's out of touch with upstate New York – but through conversations with countless constituents, telecommunications experts, and local officials, one thing has become clear: this "mission accomplished" attitude couldn't be more wrong.

Instead of the high-speed broadband the Governor promised, many of my constituents are getting slow, unreliable satellite internet. Those who will actually receive broadband won't receive it until 2020.

The people of New York deserve answers. A large amount of our tax dollars have gone to a program that has not achieved its advertised goals, and we must find out why.

If the Governor continues to mislead the people of our state on this issue, it is imperative that the Senate finds and reports the full story of the Broadband Program.

I urge you to formally investigate how the New York State Broadband Program Office has used the \$500 million budgeted for the New NY Broadband Initiative and the \$170 million awarded by the FCC.

Thank you for your attention to this issue. Please call my office at 518-455-2024 if you wish to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert G. Ort", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert G. Ort
Senator, 62nd District

RGO:jmv