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### Commonwealth, Charter Agree to Deliver Broadband Coverage to Five Unserved Towns

Agreement Will Bring Broadband to 3,600-plus Homes and Businesses in Egremont, Hancock, Peru, Princeton, and Tyringham

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**WESTBOROUGH** – The Massachusetts Broadband Institute at MassTech (MBI) and Charter Communications, Inc. (NASDAQ: CHTR) have reached agreement on a contract to deliver broadband internet service to five unserved towns in Massachusetts, eventually providing high-speed connectivity to more than 3,600 homes and businesses.

Under the MBI's Last Mile Initiative to bring broadband access to unserved residents and communities in the Commonwealth, the agency will provide Charter with a grant of \$4,420,000 toward the cost of constructing state-of-the-art broadband networks in the towns of Egremont, Hancock, Peru, Princeton and Tyringham. Once completed, Charter's networks will deliver the company's full suite of Spectrum™ TV, Internet and Voice services to residents and businesses in each town, including the industry leading base broadband speed of up to 60 Megabits per second (Mbps).

The contract calls for Charter to provide a minimum coverage level of at least 96 percent of premises in the five currently unserved towns, and is contingent on each town negotiating and signing a cable television license agreement with Charter. The MBI will cover 100 percent of the public costs of the grant to Charter, relieving the towns of the need for municipal borrowing. Charter has committed to completing the project within one year following the issuance of all necessary permits and authorizations, including receipt of pole attachment rights from the local utilities.

"Today's announcement delivers another point of progress in the Last Mile program and a path to broadband connectivity for the residents and small businesses in these communities," **stated Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker**. "We thank MBI and Charter for their work to deliver these services and new economic and educational opportunities for the towns of Egremont, Hancock, Peru, Princeton and Tyringham."

"We are excited this agreement will be able to deliver these towns broadband infrastructure in a more flexible way for local finances and create a solid foundation for economic development projects and workforce training opportunities for residents and students," **stated Lt. Governor Karyn Polito**.

This is the second award made to Charter under the Last Mile program, following [the MBI's award in August 2016](#) to support construction of broadband networks in the unserved towns of Hinsdale, Lanesborough, and West Stockbridge. That project, which is scheduled for completion in early 2018, was highlighted by Gov. Baker and Lt. Governor Polito during a [tour of small businesses in West Stockbridge this past May](#).

"Charter Communications is looking forward to partnering with Governor Baker, Lt. Governor Polito, the MBI, and the elected officials, management and residents of each of the five towns," **said Terence R. Rafferty, Regional Vice President of Field Operations, Charter Communications**. "This investment by Charter and the MBI will result in the further expansion of our state-of-the-art, fiber-rich network; will enable more than 3,600 homes and businesses in Central and Western Massachusetts to gain access to high-speed internet for the first time; and help address the goal of the Baker-Polito Administration to bring broadband to unserved areas of the Commonwealth."

The award was made under the [MBI's Private Sector Request for Proposals](#), part of the Baker-Polito Administration's commitment collaborate with towns to address Last Mile broadband gaps. The RFP requested proposals from qualified private-sector providers with an established track record of financial and technical expertise in the management and operation of residential broadband networks in the United States.

"We're excited that the RFP has netted us this outcome, which is a major step toward bringing 3,600 additional households and small businesses the broadband connectivity they need to navigate the 21<sup>st</sup> Century digital economy," **stated Tim Connelly, CEO/Executive Director of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, the parent organization of the MBI**.

The grant award was approved by votes of each town's Selectboard. Elected officials representing the five towns celebrated the announcement, citing the impact expanded broadband will have for residents.

"Congratulations to the Town of Princeton and Charter Communications on this partnership and committing to bring high-speed internet access to more areas of Massachusetts," **said Senate Majority Leader Harriette L. Chandler**. "I am looking forward to how it will positively impact the residents of Princeton and thank Charter for expanding its services."

"Residents and businesses in Egremont, Hancock, Peru and Tyringham finally have a roadmap to bridge the digital divide that has existed in western Mass for far too long," **said State Senator Adam G. Hinds**. "Charter's broadband networks

have been largely welcomed and celebrated in Hinsdale, Lanesborough and West Stockbridge and I am pleased that with today's partnership, four more unserved towns have secured a viable Last Mile solution."

"I am delighted the Town of Princeton will finally receive this much-needed network," **said State Rep. Kimberly Ferguson.** "I wish to thank all parties involved in this partnership and applaud them for their tireless pursuit of providing these services to Princeton. We are so fortunate to have funding available through MBI and its Last Mile initiative and I look forward to the project's completion."

"As the only legislator in the state who currently lives in a home without access to high-speed internet, I couldn't be more excited for my hometown of Peru to be on the verge of full connectivity," **said State Rep. Paul Mark.** "I am honored to be part of a team that has helped bring this important service to Peru and other local towns, and I know that access to high-speed internet is going to make a great difference in the lives of the people of rural Western Massachusetts."

"Broadband internet is an essential utility in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy, and I'm glad that the Commonwealth is supporting Egremont and Tyringham in moving forward with this critical piece of economic development," **said State Rep. Smitty Pignatelli.**

Today's announcement follows the MBI's recent grant to Comcast to construct a network in the town of Montgomery and the ongoing effort to extend broadband coverage in nine 'partially-served' towns. The Baker-Polito Administration has also released three rounds of grants under the Last Mile Infrastructure Grant Program, which has provided awards totaling nearly \$16 million [to expand municipal broadband networks in 18 towns.](#) The MBI has also supported projects such as the completed [municipally-owned network in the Town of Leverett,](#) as well as projects in [Alford, Otis, Warwick,](#) and [Mount Washington.](#)

In May 2016, the Baker-Polito Administration announced a [new Last Mile leadership team](#) and framework to accelerate implementation of broadband projects in unserved or underserved communities through a more flexible, community-based approach. To date, 46 of the 53 unserved or underserved towns have either completed a Last Mile project; have received a Last Mile grant for an approved project; or are considering a viable option to close the broadband gap.

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#### **About the Massachusetts Broadband Institute at MassTech (MBI):**

A division of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, the Massachusetts Broadband Institute at MassTech (MBI) is working to extend high-speed Internet access to homes, businesses, schools, libraries, medical facilities, government offices, and other public places across the Commonwealth, allowing for greater participation in the global economy and civic society. The MBI also promotes broadband usage and adoption by residents and small businesses. Learn more at <http://broadband.masstech.org>.

#### **About Charter:**

Charter Communications Inc. (NASDAQ: CHTR) is a leading broadband communications company and the second largest cable operator in the United States. Charter provides a full range of advanced broadband services, including Spectrum TV™ video entertainment programming, Spectrum Internet™ access, and Spectrum Voice™. Spectrum Business® similarly provides scalable, tailored, and cost-effective broadband communications solutions to business organizations, such as business-to-business Internet access, data networking, business telephone, video and music entertainment services, and wireless backhaul. Charter's advertising sales and production services are sold under the Spectrum Reach™ brand. Charter's news and sports networks are operated under the Spectrum Networks brand. More information about Charter can be found at [charter.com](http://charter.com).