



UNIVERSITY
of HAWAII®
SYSTEM

March 29, 2010

Ms. Marlene Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: Applications of Office of Posts and Telecommunications of French Polynesia (OPT)
FCC File Nos. SCL-LIC-20081008-00017 and ITC-214-20081008-00453

Dear Ms. Dortch:

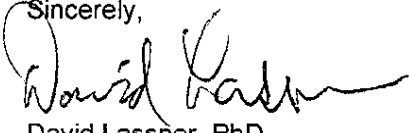
I am writing in support of the proposal by the Office of Posts and Telecommunications of French Polynesia (OPT) to land its international submarine fiber optic cable, Honotua, on the Big Island of Hawaii.

I write this letter in two capacities, as Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer of the University of Hawaii, and as the Chair of the Hawaii Broadband Task Force, which has completed its work.

The University of Hawaii (UH) System comprises all public higher education in the State of Hawaii, from community colleges and education centers on six islands to a "Research 1" university campus in Honolulu. UH is interested in fostering closer ties between our Polynesian communities of Hawaii and French Polynesia. While we share much common heritage, the lack of modern high-speed communications has limited our ability to collaborate in modern ways. The University of Hawaii is the only university in the country that teaches Tahitian language. Many of our scholars work in diverse disciplines, from archeology to marine biology, in the islands of French Polynesia with their colleagues there. We are also interested in expanding our socio-cultural ties. Modern communications is an essential tool for working together in all these domains, and Honotua represents the critical step forward to enable broadband applications to flourish between us.

As Chair of the Hawaii Broadband Task Force I was responsible for working with a diverse group of committed public and private sector representatives to develop recommendations for the Governor and Legislature to advance Hawaii's broadband future. It is a statement about how critical submarine fiber is to Hawaii's future, that it represented one of only four recommendations that we made. In brief, Hawaii is increasingly being bypassed by major transpacific fiber systems. Once the hub for these networks, Hawaii is now perceived as unimportant and not worth landing. Within Hawaii, this has devastating consequences for the cost of bandwidth and our economic development. The Task Force recommended that Hawaii aggressively support the landing of new submarine fiber systems here, in order to better position ourselves within the global economy and society. You can review our full report at www.hbtf.org.

Honotua represents one of the few new submarine fiber projects to land here. So it represents both a specific opportunity for Polynesian collaboration and cooperation, as well as a general statement affirming Hawaii's role as a hub in the Pacific. I therefore urge you to expeditiously grant OPT's applications to land and operate Honotua in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

David Lassner, PhD
Vice President for IT and CIO, and
Chair, Hawaii Broadband Task Force

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