



3196 County Hwy 55 \* Hamilton, AL 35570 \* Phone: 205-921-6712 \* Fax: 205-921-6738

### **Q3. Does this project serve locations with demonstrated community support?**

The support for the Tombigbee project has been nothing but overwhelming. Community leaders have come to the Board and management team consistently asking them to help their community by building our network in each of their areas.

Congressman, Robert Aderholt, State Senator, Larry Stutts, Alabama Representative, Jamie Kiel, and Alabama Representative Proncey Robertson along with many other state and community leaders have met with the management team and Board of Tombigbee stressing the need Franklin County has for broadband internet. This has been an ongoing conversation since the inception of freedomFIBER in 2017. These leaders have tried every avenue available to them for help in this county, but no other company is willing to even consider it due to how rural the county is (see Attachment C - Other Priorities Question 3 – Congressman Robert Aderholt.pdf, Attachment C – Other Priorities Question 3 – AL State Senate – Larry Stutts.pdf, Attachment C – Other Priorities Question 3 – AL House of Rep – Jamie Kiel.pdf, Attachment C – Other Priorities Question 3 – AL House of Rep – Proncey Robertson.pdf).

The Franklin County Chamber of Commerce and the Franklin County Development Authority speak of the many challenges, specifically the lack of high-speed internet services, faced when trying to recruit new industry to the region as well as the student challenges today in the face of the pandemic (See Attachment C - Other Priorities Question 3 - Franklin Chamber of Commerce.pdf and Attachment C – Other Priorities Question 3 – Franklin County Development Authority.pdf)

Fire Chief Leslie Cantrell of the Hodges Volunteer Fire Department and Mary Glass of the Franklin County EMA speak of the challenges they face with emergency management without access to high speed internet (See Attachment C – Other Priorities Question 3 – Hodges Volunteer Fire Department – Vina.pdf and Attachment C – Other Priorities Question 3 – Franklin County EMA.pdf).

Thirty seven teachers from the Vina School system as well as the superintendent of the Franklin County School System have independently signed letters of support for this project. They stress during this time of the pandemic, they aren't able to teach the students what they need to be and students are falling further and further behind because they don't have internet at their homes (See Attachment C – Other Priorities Question 3 – Vina Teachers.pdf and Attachment C – Other Priorities Question 3 – Superintendent – Franklin County.pdf).

The Franklin County Water Authority has been tasked with finding a way to provide the residents of Franklin County with reliable high speed internet and have been working mercilessly for more than 4 years to try to make this happen. There have been many conversations between the management and Board of Tombigbee with the committee working on this project in Franklin County to find a way to provide Franklin County with services. The Franklin County Water Authority goes into great depth the struggle they face and their support for Tombigbee to provide the much needed services for their region (See Attachment C – Other Priorities Question 3 – Franklin County Water Authority.pdf).



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When learning of Tombigbee applying for this grant, hundreds of residents of Franklin County sent their letters of support. They feel as though this is their only chance at getting high speed internet services and they show their desperation and support for the cause in their letters (See Attachment C – Other Priorities Question 3 – Franklin County Residents.pdf).