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From: Sally Doty <sally.doty@beam.ms.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, May 9, 2023 4:06:11 PM

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Subject: Meeting with MBCI - Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians

All –

I had a productive meeting with Chief Ben and his leadership team this morning at 8:30 a.m. at Tribal Headquarters. Included in the meeting were his Director of Economic Development John Hendrix, CIO Adam Morrison, and Public Works Director Brian Robinson. Brian and I have been in contact for quite some time to discuss the MBCI broadband buildout, but this was the first time that I had met the Chief. It was a very casual meeting, and we covered a variety of topics. The Chief talked about legislation

for MBCI that I supported as a state senator, and we enjoyed a discussion of common acquaintances.

I advised the Chief that our office would be compiling the 5-year plan for Mississippi and that BEAM desired input on the needs of the MBCI. The Chief shared that the MBCI application for the TBCP contained an approximately 2 million request for affordability and inclusion activities that was not funded. The Chief expressed his desire for the State to assist in funding for these activities. His staff are to send me the narrative from their grant application that will explain the details of their proposed program. I advised that we could then further discuss how these activities fit into the State's 5-year plan. We discussed digital navigators and digital skills training and the Tribe's current cooperative agreement with East Mississippi Community. The Tribe has 8 communities in Mississippi with facilities in each community that could be used for training.

Public Works Director Brian Robinson gave a report on the broadband buildout with TBCP funds and advised that the project will be complete in July. He and other members of the leadership team expressed concerns about the take rate for service. He reported that many households are choosing to use the Lifeline program that includes data with their cellphone carrier instead of signing up for broadband service and using the ACP. Participation in Lifeline precludes registration for the ACP program. As I understand it, the Lifeline benefit is tied to a household, thus if one member has the benefit, any ACP benefit is unavailable. I advised that this was a problem we are seeing across Mississippi.

Mr. Robinson also advised that the MBCI would also be seeking an ETC designation from the Mississippi Public Service Commission. I offered assistance as needed, as I am very familiar with the process through my previous position as Executive Director of the Mississippi Public Utilities Staff. Also, the BEAM grants manager handled all the ETC designations in her prior position at MPUS before moving to BEAM and can answer any detailed questions.

We concluded the meeting by reviewing the map that BEAM currently has available for CPF funding availability. We discussed areas nearby tribal areas and the possibility of the new ETC providing service in those areas.

Please let me know if you have any questions regarding this meeting.

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