



## *The Latino Institute, Inc.*

March 21, 2014

ATTN: Ms. Kristi Izzo, Secretary  
Board of Public Utilities  
44 South Clinton Avenue, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
P.O. Box 350  
Trenton, NJ 08625

RE: Docket # TO12020155

Board of Public Utilities Commissioners:

We write to you today to respectfully urge you to approve the proposed stipulation between Verizon and Board Staff. We believe your timely approval of the stipulation will encourage investment in and deployment of high-speed broadband networks throughout New Jersey.

The Latino Institute is a private, non-profit, charitable organization. Our mission is to serve as a bridge between the Latino community, and the educational, cultural, governmental, social and economic institutions of society by providing accurate, factual, and timely information on the barriers and challenges affecting the education, growth, development and well-being of that community and by developing, recommending, and advocating solutions and actions which may serve as a catalyst for change.

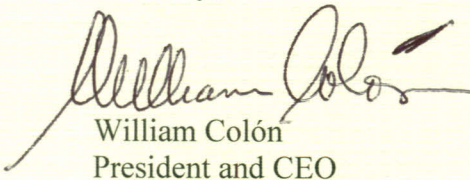
As such, broadband has been essential to our institutional objectives and broader goals for our community. Technology powered by wireless and wired broadband networks has been a great equalizer, and it is continually being used to expand opportunities to educational resources, employment opportunities, and life-sustaining services. Moreover, wireless technologies in particular are helping Hispanic Americans close the digital divide among their counterparts. A newly released Pew Research Center report found that 71% of Hispanic American adults own a cell phone. Moreover, the Pew Report found that 61% of Hispanic American adults own a smartphone – higher than other ethnic groups and the national average – which they are increasingly using to access the Internet and all it has to offer.

We welcome the findings in the Pew report and we were heartened to see an uptick by Hispanic Americans in wireless technology adoption from the last such report Pew released. However, to ensure we are able to maintain that progress, we need public officials to foster policies that promote broadband expansion and we need private partners who will embrace those challenges.

Fortunately, in New Jersey, we have had both. Verizon has invested billions of dollars in its communications infrastructure to provide new and innovative services to the public and honored its Opportunity New Jersey commitments. Now, we need the Board of Public Utilities to approve the proposed stipulation to encourage deployment of cutting-edge broadband technologies in more areas of New Jersey.

We hope you will take our thoughts into consideration. Thank you for soliciting public input on this pending matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Colón", with a stylized flourish at the end.

William Colón  
President and CEO