

COUNTY OF EL DORADO

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April 6, 2021

The Honorable Toni Atkins
President pro Tempore
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Anthony Rendon
Speaker of the Assembly
State Capitol, Room 219
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Broadband For All Funding Plan – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Atkins and Speaker Rendon:

On behalf of the County of El Dorado, we respectfully request a one-time appropriation of \$8 billion to make a serious, concentrated effort to help close the Digital Divide. The California State Association of Counties, California Forward Action Fund, California Hospital Association, California Association of School Business Officials, Urban Counties Caucus, Rural County Representatives of California, California School Boards Association, and Small School Districts' Association have already come together as part of this concentrated effort.

Closing the Digital Divide has, for too long, been a goal that seemed impossibly far out of reach, given our state's rugged geography, far-flung communities, and economic inequality. But a recent report found that the cost of building 100 Mbps fiber connections to every unserved home and business in the state might be done with an investment of \$6.8 billion. An additional \$1.2 billion investment would help Californians take advantage of all that broadband promises.

Of the funding we are requesting, \$6.8 billion would construct open-access middle-mile and 100/10 Mbps last-mile fiber optics to all unserved and underserved homes and businesses, both of which are necessary. But we know that simply providing access cannot be the end of our efforts, so we are requesting the infrastructure investment be paired with \$1.2 billion for programs to increase adoption. These efforts could include providing devices, digital skills training, service subsidies, and language access necessary for Californians to be able to use adopt broadband.

Expanding broadband access is the ideal use for the state's one-time revenues and the flexible funding provided by the American Rescue Plan Act. By transforming the educational, economic, and quality-of-life landscape of our state, it would provide short-term benefits to the people and businesses in California while significantly expanding the economy in the long term.

Using the state's financial resources to expand broadband is a public good that is both moral and practical. Committing \$8 billion to this effort would be the state's most serious effort yet to try to close the Digital Divide once and for all.

Sincerely,



John Hidahl
Chair, Board of Supervisors

- c. Senator Brian Dahle
Assemblymember Frank Bigelow
Assemblymember Kevin Kiley