



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 15-1474, **Version:** 1

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Chief Administrative Office, Economic Development Division, recommending the Board approve and authorize the Chair to sign a Letter of Support for renewal funding of the Gold Country Broadband Consortium from the California Public Utilities Commission California Advanced Services Fund as administered by the Sierra Economic Development Corporation.

**FUNDING:** N/A

### **DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION**

Chief Administrative Office, Economic Development Division, recommending the Board approve and authorize the Chair to sign a Letter of Support for renewal funding of the Gold Country Broadband Consortium from the California Public Utilities Commission California Advanced Services Fund.

### **DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND**

In 2012, the California Public Utilities Commission approved funding for the Gold Country Broadband Consortia ("Consortia"). The Consortia covers a five-county area of the some five thousand seven hundred sixty five (5,765) square miles in El Dorado, Sierra, Nevada, Placer, and portions of Alpine counties.

The membership of the Consortia includes representation from key stakeholders in each of the represented counties with a vested interest in the expanded availability and adoption of broadband services including consumers (both residential and business), local government (both city and county), Native-American communities, libraries, education, health care, workforce development and economic development entities, accessibility advocates and Internet Service Providers (ISPs). The Sierra Economic Development Corporation (SEDCorp) serves the Consortia as the Consortia's manager and fiscal agent.

Since its inception, the Consortia has: (1) developed substantive content on the benefits available via high speed broadband connections; (2) conducted community meetings throughout the region to educate informed consumers of the residents and business owners in those communities; (3) captured the commitment of the community members for adoption of broadband services in order to make the business case for attracting investment in infrastructure expansion projects; (4) worked with ISPs to advise the design those infrastructure projects; (5) organized communities and Consortia members in support of infrastructure projects; and (6) assisted in securing the capital support for potential Broadband projects. Examples of past successes include "Ground testing" meetings throughout El Dorado County in 2013-14 and a partnership in support of the recent Cal.Net application to the CPUC for funding to offer broadband expansion to rural areas of the County.

In early September of this year, the Governor signed into law AB 1262 which specifies that \$5 million in the California Public Utilities Commission California Advanced Services Fund broadband loan program be dedicated to spending on local Consortia to consolidate demand and support local and county government broadband deployment efforts. This means that additional renewal funding can be made available for a renewal of the Consortium over a two year period. The Board's action with

this item supports additional CPUC funding for Consortia activities. Staff is requesting that the Board Chair sign the letter contained in Attachment "A" supporting renewal funds for the Consortia.

With the additional funding, the County will continue to work with SEDCorp on the following deliverables:

- a. Form coalition of subject matter stakeholders working together across a multi-county region to raise the overall quality of services available via broadband;
- b. Improve local policies and procedures that facilitate the expansion of broadband infrastructure;
- c. Motivate community-supported ISP's to aggressively work to bring broadband service to unserved and underserved areas of El Dorado County;
- d. Development of investment-quality infrastructure expansion plans; and
- e. Continue to support and advocate for communities until broadband service has been delivered and adopted by every household and business.

#### **ALTERNATIVES**

Not to approve signing the attached letter and to give staff addition direction on how to proceed.

#### **OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT**

N/A

#### **CAO RECOMMENDATION**

That the Board authorize the Chair to sign a Letter of Support for renewal funding of the Gold Country Broadband Consortium from the California Public Utilities Commission California Advanced Services Fund.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

N/A

#### **CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS**

Clerk of the Board to distribute copies and send the letter to the CPUC.

#### **STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT**

Economic Development

#### **CONTACT**

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