



Requested Control Language on Broadband for FY21-22 Budget Trailer Bill – July 13, 2021

We applaud the Governor and Legislature for focusing on broadband in the State Budget and negotiating significant investments in deployment of ubiquitous high-speed Internet infrastructure throughout California. We also trust that all parties are working in good faith to serve the public interest, ensuring all Californians get connected as soon as possible with the most cost-effective investments.

With this shared goal in mind, we strongly recommend additional control language in the trailer bill to optimize return on investment and accelerate deployment to connect all residents.

These 3 common-sense provisions will significantly accelerate construction of high-speed Internet infrastructure and achieve Digital Equity by effectively getting residents connected along with all anchor institutions along the path of deployment.

Prioritize funding for projects that accomplish the following outcomes:

- Connect middle-mile construction with last-mile deployment. It is essential to immediately focus on providing Internet access to the hardest-to-reach residents—rural unserved communities, Tribal Lands, and poor urban underserved neighborhoods. The Construction of a middle-mile *only* network will not assure last-mile connectivity in a reasonable timeframe. However, construction of publicly-subsidized open-access middle-mile infrastructure that includes last-mile deployment achieves the best of both objectives—assures immediate Internet access for unserved and underserved households while also allowing other last-mile providers to access the middle mile thereby increasing competition and expanding consumer choices to include moderate prices.
- Incorporate effective public-private partnerships. Public-private partnerships with a record of proven investment and work product should be encouraged and rewarded when they leverage previous public investments (by consumers and taxpayers) in existing middle-mile backhaul and backbone to avoid duplication of middle-mile infrastructure, serve public interests, and push the envelope of innovation.
- Coordinate actions among local and regional government. State investment should be aligned with collaboration among local governments through regional agencies, including Regional Consortia and Metropolitan Planning Organizations, to streamline and expedite permitting and achieve economies of scale.

Finally, we underscore the imperative to secure now and optimize the use of federal funds. We recommend that middle mile funding which is not allocated by December 31, 2022 should revert to the CASF Infrastructure Grant Account. In addition, we are encouraged by efforts to review and revise CASF rules to broaden and maximize more efficient participation. Stakeholder collaboration focused on aligning CASF with these objectives also should be encouraged.



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