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July 6, 2017

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The Honorable Ben Hueso
Chair, Senate Energy, Utilities and Communications Committee
State Capitol, Room 4140
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 1665 - OPPOSE

Dear Chair Hueso:

On behalf of the Marin County Board of Supervisors, I write to oppose AB 1665, now scheduled for a hearing before your Committee on Monday, July 10, 2017. I am joined in this letter by my colleague, Marin County Supervisor Dennis Rodoni, who represents the rural communities of our County and serves on the oversight committee of the CPUC's regional broadband planning consortium for this area. As such, we are fully aware of how critical the need is for state broadband infrastructure funding.

Unfortunately, AB 1665 is not the solution California needs. The bill, especially as recently amended, would take California backward 1) in areas in which broadband providers can compete for public funding, and 2) in broadband service levels which funded communities can expect from public subsidies. If passed into law, AB 1665 will:

- Exclude competitive carriers active in the CPUC program today from state funding eligibility for the hundreds of thousands of homes, businesses and civic institutions slated for federal funding (FCC Connect American Fund) by AT&T and Frontier Communications.
- Create a bad precedent for lack of cooperation and integration among federal, state and private funding sources for public and utility infrastructure funding.
- Lower funded broadband service levels across rural California, while also 'locking in' the broadband status quo in specific communities that are underserved by older technology.
- Exclude from state funding the hundreds of thousands of homes in California that are today designated as "underserved" by the CPUC.
- Deny to our public and nonprofit housing communities the continued financial support for adequate broadband, where it is not provided by existing providers.

While AB 1665 began with the best of intentions, and continues to be supported by significant positive media attention, it has become a bill that is unacceptable for both our rural and urban communities in California. We note a growing number of counties and associations that had previously endorsed the bill have recently retracted their endorsements.

I hope you can join the County of Marin in opposing this bill. Our pledge is to work with you, your colleagues and communities across our state to bring back to the Capitol legislation that truly meets the needs for 21st century digital equity for all of California.

Sincerely,

Judy Arnold, President
Marin County Board of Supervisors

Dennis Rodoni,
Marin County Supervisor (District 4)

cc: Members, Senate Energy, Utilities and Communications Committee
Assemblymember Marc Levine
Senator Mike McGuire
Jay Dickenson, Chief Consultant, and Nidia Bautista, Consultant, Senate Energy, Utilities and Communications Committee