

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Order Instituting Rulemaking to Consider )  
Modifications to the California Advanced ) Rulemaking No. 12-10-012  
Services Fund. )

**COMMENTS OF GOLD COUNTRY BROADBAND CONSORTIUM, MANAGED BY  
SIERRA BUSINESS COUNCIL  
ON PHASE I ISSUES**

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March 16, 2018

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**I. Introduction**

The mission of the Gold Country Broadband Consortium (GCBC) is to increase digital access and use of broadband in designated counties in the Sierra Nevada. GCBC has taken over a \$150,000 grant to launch public-private partnerships aimed at increasing internet access and use in Nevada, Placer, El Dorado, Sierra, and eastern Alpine counties. GCBC is one of 14 regional consortiums in California funded by the California Advanced Services Fund Rural and Urban Regional Broadband Consortia grant program. GCBC was formed to leverage regional, state and natural resources as an investment in improving and expanding broadband access. As most of the territory in the CGBC is rural, there are still many unserved areas at risk of falling behind without broadband. As a crucial economic driver and increasing education and health care necessity, we need to ensure our citizens will have access to broadband as soon as possible.

**II. Comments**

**Adoption:** We agree with staff’s recommendation that the Commission fund projects that provide free broadband access in community training rooms or other public space and to fund community outreach that will increase broadband access and adoption.

ISPs should be required to increase media advertising and marketing of affordable offers to reach eligible households and increase adoption.

**Revolving Loan Account:** We find acceptable the Staff Proposal for projects with existing loans that are not yet requested or drawn loan funds to be underwritten and serviced by a financing authority, such as The California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (iBank). Staff further proposes that it will perform due diligence to establish a loan process for grantees with the chosen financing authority to facilitate the servicing of the CASF loan fund disbursements and repayment processes. As Bright Fiber, T-17495, is an approved loan in our territory, it is important that the project is not jeopardized or interrupted without access to the funds.

WHEREFORE, Gold Country Broadband Consortium, managed by Sierra Business Council respectfully requests the Commission amend its CASF proposals contained in Appendix B as set forth above in these comments.

Respectfully submitted,

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