

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

Order Instituting Rulemaking to Consider  
Modifications to the California Advanced  
Services Fund.

Rulemaking No. 12-10-012  
(Filed February 14, 2018)

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

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April 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.

**II. Proposed Changes to Broadband Infrastructure Account**

***Right of First Refusal***

GCBC does not want to see Right of First Refusal (ROFR) being used to hold up progress on potential, viable projects. It is important that the CPUC understands how ROFR could block competition, innovation and opportunity. CGBC trusts the staff's timeline recommendations for ROFR. GCBC does believe there should be negative consequences for ROFR providers that fail

to complete projects in a timely manner to prevent frivolous claims without real intent of providing upgrades or service in a timely manner. A project extension is reasonable, but not repeated project extensions.

### ***CAF II Funded Areas***

GCBC suggests CPUC adopt a process that will better equip Regional Consortia to know which CAFII areas will be prioritized. It is requested that the CAFII funded providers detail the areas they are prioritizing and share that information with Regional Consortia in an effort to increase transparency. This important deployment information will help Regional Consortia in communicating with interested parties to better understand realistic deployment timelines and feasibility.

### **III. Proposed Implementation Plan for Line Extension Program**

GCBC agrees with staff's proposal to limit grants to low income applicants and/or properties used for designated activities such as farming and education. GCBC agrees with staff's recommendation of a 95% subsidy for low-income applicants meeting CARE or California Lifeline requirements. GCBC recommends the incumbent that assumes ownership of the infrastructure facilities pays into the LEP account in an effort to sustain the account.

### **IV. Proposed Changes for Rural and Regional Urban Consortia Account Reporting and Payment**

GCBC is managed by Sierra Business Council (SBC), a small non-profit organization. Staff is recommending a bi-annual report instead of the existing quarterly report. As a non-profit, SBC does not have the capacity to be reimbursed bi-annually, it is already a stretch to cover quarterly costs before reimbursement. Bi-annual reporting means bi-annual reimbursement, therefore

GCBC does not agree with staff's recommendation to report bi-annually, but requests we continue to report quarterly.

**V. Conclusion**

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

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Chelsea Walterscheid

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