

Frontier CASF Broadband Infrastructure Grant Application – Colfax/Weimar

Item #1 - Project Summary

Applicant: Frontier California, Inc. (U-1002-C)

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Project Title: Colfax/Weimar

Location: Placer County

Type: Last Mile

Grant Request: \$2,320,497.72

Frontier California, Inc. (U-1002-C) (Frontier) is applying for a \$2,320,497.72 grant from the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) Broadband Infrastructure Grant Account to deploy last mile VDSL2 facilities that will enable High Speed Internet (HSI) broadband service to 1,411 unserved households in the Colfax/Weimar region of Placer County, California. The \$2,320,497.72 represents 90% of the projected costs for the 1,411 CASF-eligible households.

AB 1665 (Garcia, 2017) added \$330 million in new funding and made statutory changes to the CASF program codified in Section 281 of the Public Utilities Code. These changes took effect immediately upon the Governor’s signature of the bill on October 15, 2017, and provide the Commission with the authority to award 100% funding of a project on a case-by-case basis based on consideration of specified factors as well as other factors, including but not limited to, the purpose of Section 281.

Frontier’s proposed project covers approximately 17 square miles and upgrades existing facilities that are capable of providing HSI and VoIP. Due to the close proximity of Colfax and Weimar, both of which operate with the same critical broadband infrastructure, each build is contingent upon one another in order to justify a sound business case, best leverage existing infrastructure, and ultimately, provide the greatest benefit to connect Frontier customers and help close the Digital Divide. The vast majority of the build will consist of aerial facilities and utilizes already existing infrastructure, while a minor portion of the project will be in existing underground, thereby minimizing CEQA requirements. The 1,411 CASF-eligible households will receive a minimum speeds of 10 Mbps download and 1 Mbps upload, and

maximum speed of 115 Mbps download and 12 Mbps upload. As a result of this infrastructure upgrade, an additional 1,363 non-CASF Frontier households within 10,000 feet of the DSLAM will receive improved service ranging from minimum speeds of 10 Mbps download and 1 Mbps upload, and maximum speeds of 115 Mbps download and 12 Mbps upload.

The proposed Colfax/Weimar CASF project encompasses multiple significant public interest factors that justify Frontier's 90% funding request. The proposed build resides within an area that is currently not served by any form of wireline or wireless facilities-based broadband and proposes a cost-effective expansion of broadband access to 1,411 CASF-eligible households and, by DSLAM proximity, upgrades service to an additional 1,363 non-CASF households. These upgrades will be made by leveraging Frontier's existing facilities and operations, which has repeatedly been encouraged by Commission staff.

No other provider has ever submitted a CASF application for this region to provide first-time broadband service to the community of Colfax and Weimar. The principle reason for the lack of broadband in the area is that it is difficult to serve; it is remote, has rugged terrain at the base of the Sierra Mountains, and ultimately, results in costly building and network upkeep costs that are not affordable without assistance of the CASF Broadband Infrastructure Account Program funding. For example, the area is forest with many large pine trees with very hard soil and much rock, thereby making it very difficult to underground any facilities. Additionally, both wirecenters are split by Interstate 80 which creates access issues and additional cost compared to other areas.

Providing service to these communities lends significant contribution to the CASF program by promoting public safety as Colfax and Weimar reside within Tier 2 (Elevated Risk) and Tier 3 (Extreme Risk) areas of the Commission's recently updated Fire Map. Enabling broadband service to this region will provide a service of statewide significance by enhancing emergency response efforts that promote public safety as California continues to battle the "new normal" of wildfires and other natural disasters. The introduction of HSI into these communities would also significantly enhance the ability of Placer County to coordinate and streamline processes to implement the multiple local emergency preparedness bills that were passed in the 2018 legislative session, many of which require emergency alert planning communications.

Additionally, the proposed project would enable HSI to major anchor institutions in the area, including Weimar Family Care Hospital, the Colfax Library and five schools ranging K-12. Upgrades that improve

broadband access to vital health and education establishments helps ensure that the community has the opportunity to take advantage of innovative, technology-based opportunities to ensure they aren't left behind on the wrong side of the Digital Divide.

These factors provide a substantial basis under Section 281(f)(13) for the awarding of 90% funding for Frontier's proposed Colfax/Weimar infrastructure project. Expedient award of this grant under the code section will enable Frontier to expeditiously move ahead with this project in 2019.

The project size is approximately 17 square miles.

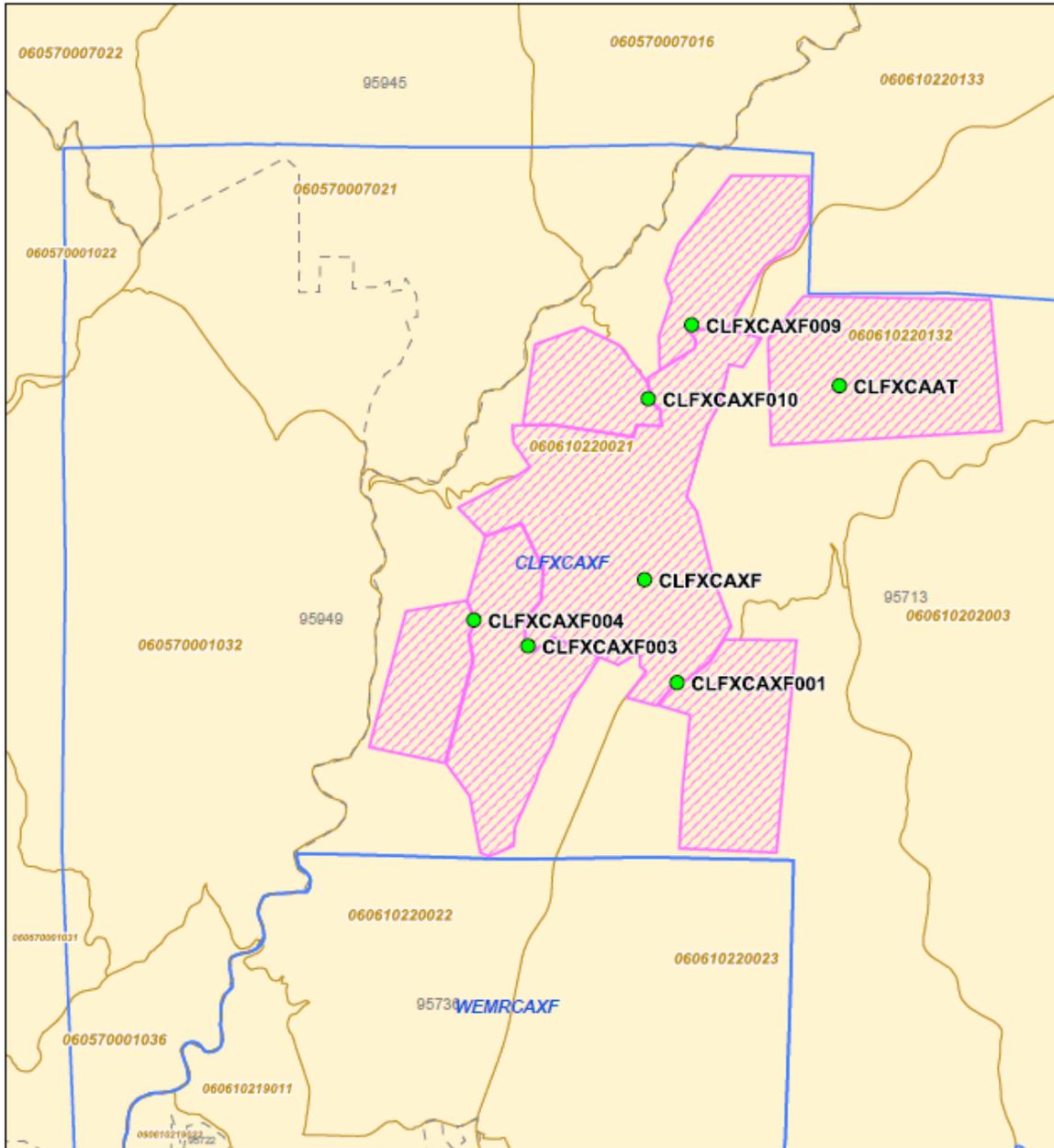
Census Block Groups Covered

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Households by ZIP

95717
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95722
95603

Colfax/Weimar CASF

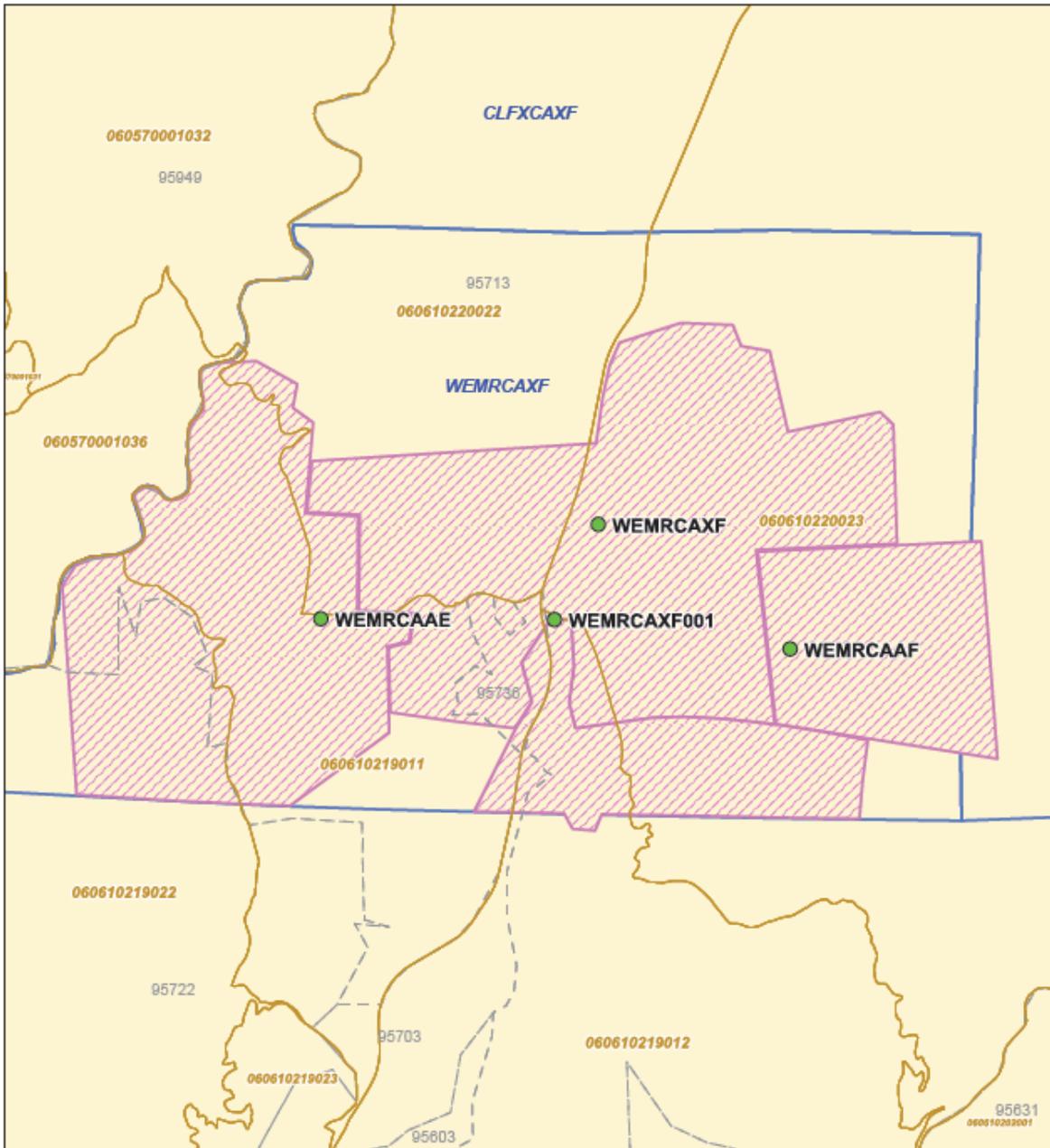


04/24/2018

Legend

- Remote
- Serving Area
- Frontier Wirecenter Boundary
- Census Block Groups
- Zip Code Boundary

Colfax/Weimar CASF



Legend

- Remote
- Census Block Groups
- Serving Area
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- Zip Code Boundary