

March 9, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Broadband for All

Dear Governor Newsom:

The following broadband companies, tech companies, non-profits, and local government advocates wish to express our support for your call to connect Californians to high-speed broadband—and we encourage you to be bold. Across the world, advanced economies have adopted universal fiber policies to bring their people into the gigabit era of broadband access. California, as the fifth largest economy in the world, should rise to the challenge and guarantee in policy that all Californians will gain access to broadband that is ready for the 21st century.

A critical first step towards universal coverage of high-speed broadband requires the legislature to update its California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) into a fiber infrastructure fund. The law currently prevents the California Public Utilities Commission from funding modern high-speed broadband infrastructure if a community has a broadband provider offering a long outdated DSL connection at 6 mbps download by 1 mbps upload. This standard—which a decades-old copper network from the era of the AT&T monopoly can meet—prevents the state from financing high-speed infrastructure to many communities in need.

The inadequacy of this out-of-date standard becomes even clearer when considering that our international competitors have adopted gigabit-era strategies for all their people in both urban and rural markets. And this investment would not only benefit Californians in the short-term; fiber infrastructure is future-proofed, which means state-financed networks will be useful and upgradeable for decades to come. Financing fiber infrastructure will also promote advanced 5G wireless services because they are dependent on high-capacity infrastructure.

Simultaneously, state financed infrastructure must also be open access to guarantee everyone can use this high-capacity infrastructure. Open access fiber benefits consumers by facilitating more competition in broadband markets with gigabit ready infrastructure. It also benefits industry because it improves available capacity for all players that can leverage the fiber lines to deliver next generation services. In order to maximize a state investment into fiber, it must be able to benefit as many potential users as possible.

We thank you, Governor Newsom, for your leadership on this critical issue of connecting Californians to the essential service of broadband. By focusing on the future with fiber infrastructure, we can ensure that efforts to resolve the digital divide will stand the test of time.

Sincerely,

Electronic Frontier Foundation

Engine

The Greenlining Institute

Common Networks

Access Now

SiFi Networks

Common Sense Media

National Hispanic Media Coalition

Monkeybrains

Tucows

Public Knowledge

Rural County Representatives of California

California Center for Rural Policy

Common Cause

Inyo Networks

Contextly.com

Access Humboldt

Praxis Optical Networks

Om Networks