

December 11, 2020



The Honorable Lena Gonzalez
State Capitol, Room 2068
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Broadband for All Legislation

Dear Senator Gonzalez:

Next Century Cities (NCC) encourages your efforts to promote state and local collaboration in California. NCC is a 501(c)(3) focused on supporting local officials and community leaders in their efforts to connect all residents with high-quality and affordable broadband service. Expanding the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) through Senate Bill 4 could help to advance those goals.

Across California, NCC's 32 member municipalities and many other local governments are working to better understand the challenges that residents face in accessing and subscribing to broadband services. Legislative remedies and funding from the State of California could provide critical resources and information for communities grappling with ongoing connectivity challenges. California residents in some of the most under resourced areas are struggling with access, affordability, service quality, and network resiliency.

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has magnified those challenges and rightly garnered the public's attention in recent months. Still, the demand for broadband access and the need to eliminate obstacles to adoption have steadily increased. Meanwhile, too many California residents are simply unable to get online.

Several aspects of Senate Bill 4 could support local connectivity initiatives:

1. Coordinating with local governments through the Governor's Office of Business and Economic development;
2. Expanding the CASF program to invest in broadband infrastructure;
3. Enabling local governments to build infrastructure funded through long-term, low interest municipal bonds;
4. Ensuring that all California communities, rural and urban, are eligible for funding so that every resident can access high quality, affordable broadband; and
5. Investing in resilient, fast, and secure networks that not only meet residents' needs today, but also stand the test of time, enabling network upgrades when the technology becomes available.

At a time when broadband access is more essential to daily life than ever before, municipal leaders across California are working tirelessly to seek partnerships and opportunities, uniting in the charge to improve connectivity for all residents. Communities of color, residents living on low incomes, and people with disabilities



remain persistently disconnected. The State of California can reduce disparities in digital opportunities by providing local officials and community leaders with the resources and tools that they need for success.

We applaud your work making broadband access for all Californians a priority.

Sincerely,
Next Century Cities

