

For Immediate Release

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NEXT CENTURY CITIES URGES THE CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE TO SUPPORT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WORKING TO EXPAND BROADBAND ACCESS

Washington, D.C. (October 6, 2020) – Next Century Cities (“NCC”) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit working with local leaders across the country to bring broadband within reach for every community. Our membership includes 32 municipalities focused on implementing local connectivity solutions in California. Particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, local officials have become increasingly concerned about disparities in broadband access and adoption.

Echoing calls from local officials and broadband advocates, NCC urges the California Governor to reconvene the legislature to evaluate whether SB1130 could help local governments that are working to meet their communities’ broadband needs. The letter describes how increasing connectivity options will help to ensure that California residents have the requisite connectivity to remain safe and fully recover from the pandemic. It also includes testimonials from local officials in California working to expand broadband throughout their communities.

Ryan Coonerty, Third District Supervisor in Santa Cruz County, states:

“We recently experienced the largest natural disaster in our county’s history. Access to the internet in our rural and urban areas makes the difference between whether people got evacuation orders and are able to access critical information about recovery and rebuilding their lives...”

Zach Friend, Second District Supervisor, Santa Cruz County, explains:

“Never before has the digital divide become more acute than during the COVID-19 pandemic. In our community, students are struggling to have reliable connectivity for distance education, seniors without high-speed Internet have been unable to use tele-health and those with furloughed work or lost jobs are disproportionately unable to apply for benefits or other opportunities due to lack of broadband access...”

According to **Next Century Cities’ Policy Counsel, Corian Zacher**, who manages local and state initiatives:

“At a time when broadband access is critical, local leaders are ready to take charge in connecting their communities. State-level support for community-based connectivity solutions is a proven way to improve broadband access and ensure that all California residents can participate in the many benefits of online services.”

Click [here](#) to review the letter sent to Governor Gavin Newsom on October 6, 2020.

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