

April 8, 2021



E-TRANSMITTAL/REGULAR MAIL

The Honorable Lena Gonzalez
California State Senate, 33rd District
State Capitol, Room 2068
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Senate Bill 4 (Gonzalez) Communications: California Advanced Services Fund - Letter of Support from the City of San Pablo

Dear Senator Gonzalez,

On behalf of the City of San Pablo, I write to express my strong support for Senate Bill 4 (Gonzalez), known as "The Broadband for All Act." This proposed bill would secure continuous funding and implement a number of critically needed reforms to the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) program administered by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).

The City of San Pablo has many parts of our community which are underserved and have limited wireless connectivity or poor connection to internet. In November 2020, the San Pablo City Council adopted a new SMART 5G/San Pablo Environment for Everything Digital (S.P.E.E.D.) Policy which underscores the importance of digital inclusion and closing the digital divide for our underserved community by supporting a variety of broadband, wireless, or SMART 5G projects from the public and private sectors.

As a result of this adopted policy, the City has already struck a partnership with Contra Costa County Library Services to fund 100 Wi-Fi "Hot Spot" devices to be placed in circulation for check-out to residents at the San Pablo Library (April 2021). Most recently, the City executed a Memorandum of Understanding with the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) to develop a new WCCUSD-provided Wi-Fi EdConnect Connectivity Project to assist students and families to connect to the WCCUSD's new wireless network to support distance learning programs (April 2021).

Additionally, the City has been focused on a long-term solution to bridging the digital divide by diligently working on a City-wide public fiber project in order to ensure that our most vulnerable neighborhoods have internet connectivity. Phase I was recently completed in September 2020 at a cost of \$1M which links all City facilities with high-capacity fiber in October 2020. Phase II of the City's public fiber project includes developing new broadband analytics needs assessment to determine which city neighborhoods are "dark areas" for future public fiber design and deployment.

Honorable Lena Gonzalez, California State Senate, 33rd District
Re: SUPPORT FOR SB 4 (GONZALEZ) COMMUNICATIONS: CASF
April 8, 2021
Page 2

As such, we are especially appreciative of the legislation's proposal to create a Broadband Bond Financing Securitization Account within CASF, which will fund the costs related to broadband bond financing and securities, including the deployment of infrastructure by a local government or nonprofit organizations.

We **strongly agree** with the assessment of some of the major issues with the current CASF, including:

- The fact that current eligible project speeds are too slow
- The fact that jurisdictions with slightly higher, but still poor internet speeds may be ineligible
- The fact that local governments are currently last in the queue to be considered for CASF funds
- The fact that CASF has insufficient funding and the surcharge sunsets in 2022

San Pablo is committed to ensuring all of our city's residents and residents throughout the State have quality access to internet. SB 4 is critical piece of legislation if we truly desire Californians to have equitable access to key services such as telehealth, emergency communications, online education and distance learning, and more.

Again, we are pleased to support Senate Bill 4 and thank you for your work on this critical piece of legislation.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Pabon-Alvarado, Mayor
City of San Pablo

cc: San Pablo City Council
City Manager
City Attorney

bc: Sam Caygill, East Bay Division, League of California Cities, scaygill@cacities.org