

April 8, 2021



E-TRANSMITTAL/REGULAR MAIL

The Honorable Cecilia Aguiar-Curry
California State Assembly, 4th District
State Capitol, Room 5144
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Assembly Bill 14 (Aguiar-Curry) Communications: broadband services:
California Advanced Services Fund - Letter of Support from the City of San
Pablo**

Dear Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry:

On behalf of the City of San Pablo, I write to express my strong support for Assembly Bill 14 (Aguiar-Curry) which would prioritize the deployment of broadband infrastructure in California's most vulnerable and unserved rural and urban communities by extending the ongoing collection of funds deposited into the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) to provide communities with grants necessary to bridge the digital divide.

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.

We hope to access any funding that would advance our City's pursuit of a public fiber ring built throughout the City, ensuring equitable access to internet for all residents in our community, especially those who have been traditionally underserved. This is especially important now given that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the digital divide that separates Californians without internet connectivity from those that are connected, and depend on fast and reliable internet access as a normal part of their daily lives. As such, we especially appreciate the bill's proposal to create a Broadband Bond Financing and Securitization Account to support costs related to financing the deployment of broadband infrastructure by a local government agency or nonprofit organization, including but not limited to, payments of costs of debt issuance, obtaining credit enhancement, and establishment and funding of reserves for the payment of principal and interest on debt.

San Pablo is committed to ensuring all of our city's residents and residents throughout the State have quality access to internet. Assembly Bill 14 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 Assembly Bill 14 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