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Senator Padilla Elected Vice-Chair of the California Broadband Council

Sacramento –Monday, the California Broadband Council voted to elect Senator Alex Padilla (D-Pacoima) Vice Chair of the Council. Padilla, a graduate of MIT, serves as Chair of the Senate Energy, Utilities and Communications Committee. Michael Peevey, President of the California Public Utilities Commission, was elected Chair of the Council.

“I look forward to serving as the Vice Chair of the California Broadband Council,” said Senator Padilla. “The California Broadband Council will provide strong, coordinated state leadership to bring high-speed Internet access to residents in every area of our state. At this critical time, the Broadband Council will ensure that California is well-positioned to coordinate state resources and share information to remove barriers in achieving full deployment and adoption of broadband by all Californians and to maximize our opportunities for federal dollars,” Padilla added.

The California Broadband Council was established to maximize the state’s opportunities for federal and private broadband funding, building on the \$420 million in broadband infrastructure grants from the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and the \$57 million in California Advanced Services Fund grants already awarded in the state. They are also tasked with increasing coordination among state departments and agencies involved in broadband networks and expanding broadband accessibility, literacy, adoption, and usage.

The Council is charged with reviewing implementation of the 2008 Broadband Task Force Report recommendations and improving coordination among state agencies to more effectively compete for federal funds made available through the National Broadband Plan.

“California is on a path to ensuring broadband is available everywhere and I am so pleased to be a part of the efforts to bridge the digital divide,” said CPUC President Michael R. Peevey. “I thank my fellow Council members for the opportunity to serve as Chair as we work to maximize funding and coordination among state agencies and departments. I look forward to working with them and with Senator Padilla, who brings not only a wealth of experience to the Council, but a determination to ensure that the state and its residents realize all the potential that can be gained by ubiquitous broadband.”

During yesterday’s initial Council meeting, the California Technology Agency reported on the state’s receipt of more than \$500 million in ARRA grants for broadband infrastructure, public computer centers,

and digital literacy projects. The Agency also outlined further tasks to implement recommendations in the 2008 report of the Governor's Broadband Task Force.

The Council also received an update on the deployment of the California Telehealth Network, now under construction to reach more than 800 rural and urban health care sites. The Telehealth Network, administered by the University of California, Davis, is currently seeking applications from which to select 15 model e-health communities that will be connected to the network.

In addition, the Council heard from multiple stakeholders throughout the state who are working to bring affordable broadband service to disadvantaged communities and deploying wireless and other technologies to bring broadband to hard-to-reach communities.

Senator Padilla has a history of working on broadband issues and legislation both as a member of the Senate and previously as President of the Los Angeles City Council:

- In 2010, SB 1040 (Padilla) was signed, increasing funding for the California Advanced Services Fund by an additional \$125 million to support broadband deployment statewide and position California to maximize opportunities under the new National Broadband Plan released by the Federal Communications Commission.
- In 2008, Senator Padilla's SB 1193 was signed by the Governor, which implements the California Advanced Services Fund by allocating \$100 million to build-out broadband infrastructure in unserved and underserved areas throughout California.
- Also in 2008, the Governor signed SB 1437 (Padilla), which allows community colleges to be eligible for the California Teleconnect Fund and receive discounts on selected telecommunications services. The bill also codifies the California Virtual Campus.
- While a member of the Los Angeles City Council, Padilla served as chair of the Information Technology and General Services Committee, which oversees cable companies.

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