

From: [REDACTED]
To: [CA Broadband Council](#)
Cc: Caleb Dardick; Alison Lehman
Subject: Nevada County's public comment on the draft California State Broadband Action Plan
Date: Wednesday, November 18, 2020 1:18:38 PM
Attachments: image004.png
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Nevco-Public-Comment-CA-Broadband-Plan-Nov18-2020.pdf

Please see attached comments from Nevada County on the Broadband Plan draft.

Thank you,

Steve



Steve Monaghan

Chief Information Officer

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via email: [CABroadbandCouncil@state.ca.gov](mailto: CABroadbandCouncil@state.ca.gov)

To: Broadband Council Action Plan Team

Fr: Steve Monaghan, Director, Information and General Services Agency, County of Nevada

Re: Public Comment on the draft California State Broadband Action Plan

Dt: November 18, 2020

The County of Nevada agrees that high-speed Internet is “a need-to-have.” This longstanding need has been highlighted by the pandemic’s effects on students, workers, and our community overall. Broadband is an economic necessity for the survival of rural communities.

Our experience has highlighted that the most critical gap for rural counties such as ours is the need for immediate, significant **funding for building last-mile infrastructure** to unserved and underserved residents and businesses.

We need to reform existing state programs to explicitly allow local governments to facilitate infrastructure construction and receive funding directly, and to limit the ability of incumbent service providers to challenge and block valid projects and applications for funding.

After almost a decade of having the Vast Network middle-mile project installed and working in our county, we still have not had a single last-mile provider tap into it and do a last-mile project to connect homes and businesses. This is in part due to the negative economics of developing a sizable broadband project in our challenging topology and sparsely populated rural areas, inaccurate State/Federal broadband maps and grant criteria that enable incumbent providers to block projects. Incumbent providers have no interest in lower-density projects that serve rural communities, however they consistently protest public funding for these important projects.

Having tried and failed to get our major local providers to expand their service footprint, our County has pivoted our local broadband strategy to focus on smaller, neighborhood-based projects serving 20-200 households.

However, there are several challenges to make this work that the plan might address:

1. State and Federal grants are too complicated and burdensome to pursue on smaller projects; and
2. CEQA is a high bar and barrier for small projects to get over.

State leadership is needed to streamline grant applications and support programmatic EIRs to help reduce costs and expedite implementing needed projects.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, please contact me at

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