

California Broadband Council (CBC) Meeting

January 24, 2024

9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Meeting Recap and Transcript

In accordance with GC 11123.5, the CBC continued to conduct hybrid teleconference meetings and provide a physical meeting location for the public to view and participate in CBC meetings.

The California Broadband Council met on Wednesday, January 24, 2024 at 9:30am in CoveredCA's Tahoe Board Room at 1601 Exposition Boulevard in Sacramento. Members of the public, presenters, and ex-officio members had the option to join in person or via virtual conference.

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome

Madam Chair Liana Bailey-Crimmins welcomed Council members and attendees.

Housekeeping & Roll Call

A quorum was established for the meeting.

Name	Organization	Member / Designee	Present	Absent
Chair Director Liana Bailey-Crimmins	California Department of Technology	Member	X	
Commissioner Darcie Houck	California Public Utilities Commission	Member	X	
Deputy Director Marvin Green	California Office of Emergency Services, Logistics Management	Designee	X	
Dr. Kristina Mattis	California Department of Education	Designee	X	
Chief Deputy Director Jason Kenney	Department of General Services	Designee	X	

Deputy Secretary Lori Pepper	California Transportation Agency, Innovative Mobility Solutions	Member	X	
President and CEO Sunne McPeak	California Emerging Technology Fund	Member	X	
Deputy Secretary Michael Flores	Department of Food and Agriculture	Designee	X	
Program Manager Josh Chisom	California State Library, Broadband Opportunities	Designee	Online, X	
Secretary Christina Snider-Ashtari	Office of Tribal Affairs	Member	X	
Senator Steven Bradford	Senate Energy, Utilities, and Communications Committee	Member	Online, X	
Assemblymember Mike A. Gipson	Assemblymember Mike A. Gipson	Member	X	

Agenda

Madam Chair Liana Bailey-Crimmins briefly overviews the California Broadband Council agenda for the day.

Agenda Item 2 – Executive Report

Deputy Director Scott Adams provided a high-level recap of various Broadband for All programs and initiatives, including the Annual Broadband for All Action Plan Review and Revision Process, Partner & Stakeholder Engagement, the Draft Digital Equity Plan, an Affordable Connectivity Program Update, and the CDT CPUC Letter to Congress.

Agenda Item 3.1 – Broadband for All Updates

Deputy Director Scott Adams shared updates on the Broadband for All Action Plan Status, Review, and Revision. He presented the 18 complete and six in progress action items in addition to providing highlights of five action items.

The following CBC member made additional comments:

- Director Liana Bailey-Crimmins
- Ms. Sunne McPeak

Agenda Item 3.2 – Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative Update

Deputy Director Mark Monroe shared a Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative (MMBI) stakeholder engagement plan and provided an update on the joint build & lease/purchase partner interactive map. He also described the type of map route updates featured on the MMBI website and highlighted the joint build & lease/purchase 2024 milestones.

The following CBC members and presenter made additional comments:

- Director Liana Bailey-Crimmins

Agenda Item 3.3 – Last-Mile Program Update

Commissioner Darcie Houck from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) provided a 2023 Broadband Investment Last Mile Initiative Snapshot on the various Last-Mile Programs, including the Federal Funding Account Applications, Loan Loss Reserve Program, California Advanced Services Fund, and recent CPUC outreach.

The following CBC members and presenters made additional comments:

- Ms. Sunne McPeak
- Commissioner Darcie Houck
- Assemblymember Mike A. Gipson
- Secretary Christina Snider-Ashtari

Agenda Item 3.4 – Affordable Connectivity Program

Sunne Wright McPeak from the California Emerging Technology Fund provided an update on enrollment in the Affordable Connectivity Program. She also highlighted the partnerships that were involved in the Get Connected! CA Mobilization effort and shared highlights. As of Monday, January 22, forty-nine percent of eligible California households have enrolled in the ACP program.

The following CBC members and presenters made additional comments:

- Director Liana Bailey-Crimmins
- Deputy Secretary Lori Pepper
- Commissioner Darcie Houck
- Assemblymember Mike A. Gipson

Agenda Item 4 – NTIA IIJA Programs – State Digital Equity Planning and BEAD

Deputy Director Scott Adams from CDT and Deputy Director for Broadband from CPUC Maria Ellis provided updates of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Programs. Deputy Director Scott Adams provided updates on the draft State Digital Equity Plan process. He also shared the State Digital Equity Plan (SDEP) engagement efforts and outcomes thus far. Lastly, Deputy Director Adams closed his portion outlining the SDEP projected timeline. Deputy Director Maria Ellis spoke briefly on the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) status and timeline.

The following CBC members made additional comments:

- Ms. Sunne McPeak
- Commissioner Darcie Houck

Agenda Item 5 – 2024 Meeting Schedule Change

Deputy Director Scott Adams proposed to Broadband Council Members the 2024 meeting schedule. The Council voted unanimously to hold the remaining 2024 quarterly meetings on the fourth Tuesday of the month on April 23, July 23, and October 22 in an effort to move the meeting closer to downtown.

Agenda Item 6 – Public Comment

Staff proceeded to address public comments, starting with in-person comments, then those with their hands raised on Zoom, and comments sent in via email.

The following members of the public made comments in person:

Patrick Messac
Diego Rodriguez

The following members of the public made comments via Zoom:

Dr. Krystal Rawls
Lili Gangas
Ulises Zatarain
Lindsey Skolnik
Georgia Savage
Jim Luttjohann
Robert Asquith

Josie Covarrubias
Trish Kelly

Four public comments received prior to the meeting in California Broadband Council Email Inbox.

Email Comment #1: Anokhi Mehta, Oakland Youth Commission

“My name is Anokhi Mehta and I am on the Youth Commission for the City of Oakland.

I represent district 4, and am very passionate about widespread, equitable access to internet services.

I am writing to ensure that this once-in-a-generation funding reaches the communities it is intended to serve.

I am concerned that your maps do not properly show communities in need, as there is hard evidence certain districts do not have proper access to broadband services. Specifically, International Blvd, whose services were completely cut, requires this infrastructure.

Oakland youth deserve the essential tool of technology without being affected by the city they live in.

The State of California must act now to increase digital equity and take care of its citizens in need. Thank you.”

Email Comment #2: Brian Ibarra Morales, Oakland Youth Commission

“My name is Brian Ibarra Morales and I am on the Youth Commission for the City of Oakland.

I represent District 7.

I am writing to ensure that this once-in-a-generation funding reaches the communities it is intended to serve.

I am concerned that if investment is not put into communities like East Oakland, my neighbors and family will continue not having access to internet and feel disconnected, similarly to how historical redlining in the same community made residents feel. During the pandemic, #OaklandUndivided was the only reason my siblings and I were able to log into school every day. I personally know lots of youth who still don't have access to internet.

The State of California must act now to correct the maps to ensure 100% of Oakland public school students have access to a reliable internet connection and that isn't distributed to more affluent communities with more access to these services.”

Email Comment #3: Haniel Kebede, Oakland Youth Commission

“My name is Haniel Kebede and I am on the Youth Commission for the City of Oakland.

I represent District 3.

I am writing to ensure that this once-in-a-generation funding reaches the communities it is intended to serve.

I am concerned about the fact that crucial funding for broadband infrastructure that will allow for faster and more stable internet is being allocated not to the underserved communities of Oakland, but to the more affluent cities of Pleasanton and Beverley Hills. We are in the so-called “digital age”, but we as a state are not even able to provide stable and accessible internet access to the communities that lack it.

Oakland youth deserve to have basic access to internet and online resources that would otherwise not be available to them if this funding isn’t distributed in an equitable manner.

The State of California must act now to prevent and reverse Oakland's ever-growing digital disparity.”

Email Comment #4: Ana Xu Lu, Resident of Oakland

“My name is Ana Xu and I represent At-Large on the Oakland Youth Commission.

I am writing to ensure that this once in a generation funding reaches the communities it is intended to serve.

I am concerned that Oakland is being brushed to the side as the initial budget was reduced, leading to the broadband with three main branches being reduced to one and the area with the most need: East Oakland is slowly being forgotten. The inaccurate state broadband maps are also furthering the problem as East Oakland, the area with the most need is being represented as doing fine when internet access is often more expensive in the area while the speed is one of the lowest, going below the slowest plan you can purchase. The maps need to be corrected as soon as possible and be placed as a priority rather than being slowly evolved.

While I don't live in East Oakland, I live in International close to Fruitvale and when my family just moved to Oakland we had to wait for various months since there was not the proper infrastructure, so I had to rely on my school and the library to complete school work. This was also before the pandemic, now we are in an age where internet is indispensable for students' education.

This is one of the few chances we might have to closing the digital divide.”

Director Bailey-Crimmins thanked the public for their heartfelt comments.

Closing

Director Bailey-Crimmins thanked Deputy Secretary Lori Pepper for her 4.5 years of service on the California Broadband Council and wished her the best of luck in her future endeavors.

Deputy Secretary Lori Pepper reflected on

The following CBC members and presenters made additional comments:

- Sunne McPeak
- Commissioner Houck
- Scott Adams

Director Bailey-Crimmins thanked Council members, presenters, and attendees and noted the next meeting is Tuesday, April 23, 2024 at 9:30-11:30am. The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

(Meeting recording and presentation slides from the meeting will be posted to the California Broadband Council's website.)

Transcript

Alright! Good morning, and welcome to the first California Broadband Council meeting of 2024. Today is January 24, 2024. My name is Liana Bailey-Crimmins. I'm the Director of Department of Technology and the State Chief Information Officer. I also have the privilege of chairing the California Broadband Council, and this wonderful team membership that we have here. I also want to acknowledge that today we are at the Covered California board or their boardroom, and so I want to thank the AV staff and staff for letting us use their boardroom and obviously cover California for letting us use your facility. The first order of business is, Ms. Nguyen will call roll call, and also provide housekeeping items. So, miss, when, if you'd like to go ahead and do that for us. Thank you.

Thank you. Good morning Council members and members of the public. In accordance with Government Code 11123.5, the California Broadband Council will continue to conduct hybrid teleconference meetings and provide a physical meeting location for the public to view and participate in California Broadband Council meetings. Council members, please announce your presence as your name is called. State Chief Information Officer and Director Bailey-Crimmins.

Here.

Commissioner Houck.

Here.

Deputy Director Green.

Here.

Dr. Kristina Mattis.

Here virtually.

Thank you. Chief Deputy Director Kenney.

Here.

Thank you. Deputy Secretary Pepper.

Here.

Ms. McPeak.

Thank you. Deputy Secretary Flores.

Here.

Thank you. Mr. Chisom.

Here.

Secretary Snider-Ashtari.

Here.

Thank you. Senator Bradford.

Here.

Thank you. Assemblymember Gipson. All right. Madam Chair, we do have quorum. Next, for housekeeping items for Council members and members of the public. This meeting is being recorded. We will be posting the recording of this meeting slides and transcripts to the Broadband for All portal. Attendees, please note that there is time allocated at the end of the meeting for public comments, either in person via Zoom phone in and read through of public comments sent via email submitted prior to the meeting. Presenters, please cue Amanda to advance your slides. Committee members, please use the raise your hand feature on Zoom, or raise your hand in person to notify Chair and Director Bailey-Crimmins to call on you to speak. Alright and in terms of view for folks at home, please view slide by side speaker view when point PowerPoint slides are shared. Gallery view when PowerPoint slides are not shared. Closed captioning is available, and for reaction, please use star 9 if you're calling in by phone or

again, the reaction raise hand button to raise your hand. Madam Chair, we may begin.

Thank you, Ms. Nguyen. Alright. We'll go ahead and put the agenda up on the screen. So on today's agenda, it is information rich as you can see, we will have updates from as we're looking at Middle Mile Broadband initiative, Last Mile and Affordable Connectivity Programs. In addition, we're going to hear highlights from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act broadband programs as it relates to the State digital equity plan, Broadband Equity Access and the Deployment of the BEAD plan. The last order of business based on member comment last session was regarding a 2024 meeting schedule, a potential opportunity to change the date that we meet, to accommodate last downtown, a desire to have a location downtown, so we will put that up for a formal vote to the members before we open up public comment before we get started, I'd always like to give each of the members if you have an opportunity. If you want to comment beforehand before we get started with the official agenda. So I first start in the room. Is, are there any comments from anyone in the room before we get started? I see none in the room. Ms. Nguyen, if you let me know, is everybody anybody? I just to let you know I can't see anybody online. So you'll just let me know if there's anybody online. Okay, thank you. All right, we'll go ahead and get to the first agenda item. And that is the executive report from Mr. Scott Adams.

Thank you Director Bailey-Crimmins, Broadband Council members, and members of the public. I'm Scott Adams. I'm the Deputy Director of the Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy within the Department of Technology and it's my pleasure to provide a brief executive report out on the progress that we've made since our last meeting in October. Next slide, please. How's that? Great. So what we wanted to touch on is per the last meeting and the direction and the Broadband for All Action Plan, and the permission that was given by the Broadband Council at the last meeting our staff has conducted the annual review and revision process for the state's Broadband for All Action Plan. We've met with all of the designated action item owners, reviewed whether or not there should be any revisions or and got an update on that. We'll provide a little bit more of a bigger detail but that process has been completed. We wanted to note that as with last year, partner and stakeholder engagement is going to be front and center on all of the Broadband for All initiatives. And really, I continue to lean in and focus on inclusion of the partners and stakeholders meaningful and bidirectional engagement, and making sure that those voices that you know most need to be heard are heard. So what would like to tell you is that because the draft Digital Equity Plan is out for public comment right now, it

envisions stakeholder engagement and you know, strategy, that we will once the plan is finalized, be coordinating with Monica Hernandez, who's our Chief Deputy Director at CDT for communications and stakeholder engagement and ensure that the engagement plan is synced up with that that was announced at the Middle Mile Advisory Committee last week, and also with the Public Utilities Commission, because our ongoing coordination on all things Broadband Middle and Last Mile, BEAD and digital equity are going to be critical. So wanted to let you know that that is in the works. The next item I'd love to tell you is that since the last Broadband Council meeting, we did, in fact, complete the draft State Digital Equity Plan. We posted it and we're currently in the public comment process. Again, this has its own separate action or its own separate agenda items so we'll go in more detail. But, we're really excited about achieving that milestone and nearing another milestone, which is the end of the public comment period. The last item we wanted to brief you on is this body has since, you know, March of 2022 made promoting the Affordable Connectivity Program front and center as part of the state's Broadband for All efforts to really help address the affordability and adoption rates here in the State. We, as an office have done much work advancing our FCC Affordable Connectivity Outreach Grant, but also engaging with other partners. Sunne McPeak is going to give the broader update on the ACP but we're at a critical juncture so we felt it was a responsible thing to do to inform you, the Broadband Council and members of the public, of a critical point in time we are for that essential program. As you know, it was a 14.2-billion-dollar program that was authorized under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, 23 million California. 23 million U.S. households are enrolled in the program and a good number of California households are in that. That program is set to run out of funding projected to run out of funding sometime in April of this year. We're heartened by the advocacy efforts that are going on at the National and State level to ask for reallocation and funding, but also wanted to make sure folks know, if we could advance to the next slide, of some important developments with the ACP program. And so the first of which is on January eleventh, the FCC issued an order laying out the wind down process for the program if, in fact, funding is not allocated for the program. Another important date is that if funding is not reallocated, that February seventh will be the last day that ACP will accept new applications and enrollments. That means that eligible households must be approved and enrolled by an ISP by 11:59 PM on the seventh to receive the benefit. And then, really the next day, on February eighth, there will be a program freeze for no new enrollments. Starting late January, it's actually this week, households that are currently enrolled in the Monthly ACP benefit will start to receive notices from Internet companies with information about the end of the benefit. We'll

include the timing of the potential end of the program, the amp of the loss of the benefit on the Households Bill, and then again April 2024 the FCC anticipates the existing funding could run out by the end of April, with only a partial benefit through May. And again, that's a big if that's if Congress does not reallocate funding to the program which leads me to the next slide. Knowing how critical this program has been how important and central it's been to this body, to our State, our Broadband for All program. Thanks Director Bailey-Crimmins and President Reynolds at the California Public Utilities Commission. Given that our two entities have significant responsibilities on broadband, I issued a letter last night to the California Delegation Congressional Delegation urging that they support reallocation of funding. That letter was posted on the California Broadband Council website, and there's a QR code on the presentation here if anyone would like to go directly to that letter. And that completes my report.

Thank you, Mr. Adams. Excellent progress. I'd like to open it up to the Broadband Council members to see if there are any questions for Mr. Adams, or comments. I see none in the room. Are there any virtually

alright? We see none, We'll go ahead and go to the next agenda, item number 3, which is an update for broadband for all, quite a few presenters, on this the first presenter for 3 A is specific Deputy Director Adams is going to talk about the broadband action items.

Thank you, Director Bailey-Crimmins and members Council. It's good to be back to brief you quickly on the annual review and revision process of the State's Broadband for All action plan. If you could go to the next slide, please. So really we, we would like to let you know about the status again. We've conferred with the State agencies and other entities that were designated responsible parties for the action items in the plan, that the progress remains as it was at the end of last year, where we have 18 items that are considered complete, but are revised and refreshed on an annual basis. And it's really structures and frameworks that have been put in place upon which progress continues on after that. There are 6 action items that remain open and those are largely items that are fairly complex and policy related. And after discussing with the various action items owners. We report that there were no revisions recommended, so there are no revisions to report to you, or members of the public. Can we advance the next slide, please? What I did want to share here is just some highlights again, and as we said, the Broadband for All Action Plan was really like a framework and a and a roadmap for the State working to close the digital divide, and many of the action items that were designating the plan are fluid and dynamic and continue to you know, need to be monitored and refreshed and have progress made towards that. So we've picked 5 different action items

for the Council to kind of demonstrate how that works and the items in the green boxes indicate action items that were determined to be complete. But that significant progress continues on you know, over the last year, and in the coming years. The yellow boxes are those that remain open but still significant progress has been made. So for example on Action Item 6, which relates to enhancing, permitting it all levels of government, the Department of Technology, and the Governor's office of business and economic development. Many members of this Council continue to work together to enhance and expedite permitting processes to support all broadband deployment in the State, and just a couple of examples of that or we developed a local jurisdiction permitting playbook to support Last Mile deployments that actually was revised into a second version, last year, and we leverage the digital equity and BEAD regional planning workshops do an infrastructure planning session where we made sure that locals were aware that this was a tool for guidance and best practices to support deployment on action Item 8 related to next Gen you know, Deputy Director Green, and the folks at OES continue to make great progress on this. For instance, they're able to report that all regions currently have next, Gen. 911 traffic migrated to at least one public safety answering point on action. Item number 12, lifeline. You know, Commissioner Houck and her peers at the PUC continue to look at ways to refine that, including having established a pilot this year that would enable providers to pair ACP with both State and Federal lifeline. And so that's something that has been set in motion in the last year, and then, I think, on items number 16 and 18. They really speak to the fact that Broadband for All really is a whole Statewide multi layers, stakeholder effort. On action item number 16, promotion of affordable Internet offers the entire Broadband Council has really thrown their weight behind that program and made significant progress. And then, lastly, wanted to call out action item number 18, which is the establishment of a multi-layer digital inclusion network. Really, thanks in large part to the coordinated outreach and engagement over the last you know, couple of years. But specifically over the last year on digital equity, BEAD and Middle and Last Mile, we've been able to grow the state network of digital inclusion advocates to over 10,000 partners. And so that is something we will continue to grow. And that's an example of how these action items continue to advance and live on. So that concludes my report Director Bailey-Crimmins.

Thank you, Mr. Adams. Excellent progress again. This shows how effective this committee is and the partnership that it takes for all of us to make a difference in the lives of California. So congratulations. Obviously, you're highlighting it, but it really is overreaching to the great people that are to my right and left, and who are online. So thank you for all the accomplishments more to come. But

look forward, looking forward to that. The next agenda item is 3 B. Which is, oh, sorry I want to open it up if anybody has any questions or comments. We have a Ms. McPeak.

Oh, thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to commend the California Broadband Council and the Department of Technology for being so disciplined to report out each meeting cause. That is, I think, part of the cadence that keeps us marching forward. So I just want to salute that. Commend the work. Keep it up.

Thank you. Any other comments or questions from anyone in the room from a members or online? Okay, we'll go ahead and go to agenda item number 3B, which is Deputy Director Mark Monroe, who will provide an update on the Middle Mile Broadband Initiative.

Yes, good morning Chair and members. Monroe with the Middle Mile Broadband Initiative. Happy to be able to provide a brief update this morning on the progress of the project. So as I'm hoping everybody's tracking, we had our first quarterly meeting of the year last week. And we were able to talk about how we're moving towards a construction on a number of fronts on the project. And so it's an exciting time. We've all been waiting for 2024, when all of the various efforts we've been doing simultaneously would be able to get us into this stage of the project. Since we last met in October, we've gone out with another RFI Squared to look for additional partners that you might remember the last one yielded about 65% of the network. So it was very productive. We also have been engaging with a number of governments government to government partnerships where they are ready to you know, we're able to share some construction costs. And so that's been exciting. And then, just noting that the budget that came out a few weeks ago. The Governor's budget includes 1.5 billion dollars over 2 years to meet the Governor's commitment for funding the entire network and getting it completed by December of 2026, and go to the next slide here. Since we last met in October, we've held over 40 stakeholder engagements with over 400 participants including tribal leaders or tribal representatives local representatives and various stakeholders. And at the this last MMAC meeting, Deputy Director Monica Hernandez, our communications deputy at CDT announced a new stakeholder engagement strategy. And this is the objective is the plan is to really increase transparency and communicate improve communications for stakeholders within the broadband for all middle broadband initiatives and well, we'll continue to utilize the Broadband for All email that goes out monthly. We'll also we're also continuing to refine our website and improve the information that we provide on our in terms of mapping, so that the public can track any adjustments? This will include a component that is a new component of what's

new and it will include map a mapping change log that will allow us to allow the people to see what's driving any adjustments to the map. And then it will also, we'll be providing those monthly updates at the end of each month. We'll be posting them on our website, and then we'll also be scheduling a quarterly virtual stakeholder meetings starting in February. I'm going to jump to the next slide. What we see here is a new functionality on our interactive map that allows users to click on any given section of the map to see how each segment is being delivered. The map outlines the individual lease or joint build project and provides a pop down window, indicating who the partner is and how many miles, so you'll be able to, that will, that also will be updated as of next week. Next slide. Alright as with any project there will there will be adjustments and refinements to the MMBI map. As we move forward with from planning to design and construction so these adjustments will reflect dynamics such as data reconciliation. Where there's a lease that that is off of the State highway system, and we'll be able to see exactly where there's a variance there, and where the final network will be and also there will be sections that it, where it makes sense to perhaps use a frontage road or a county road that runs alongside the freeway to avoid certain projects that are going on and permitting challenges or other physical barriers. And then, as I noted, there will be a map, update log, and more information posted on our what's new section of our website next slide. Here is the map log that we that I that I spoke of and so this is where you could well, the public will be able to go in and see any adjustments that are made, and kind of what was driving them next slide. So the next 2 slides are really showing how for the lease and joint builds were moving into construction. So in this case we had Arcadian began broke ground in December on a project down in East Los Angeles, and we see that Lumen and Zeo are beginning work this quarter and next quarter Siskiyou Tel and Vera will be starting construction on their pieces if we move to the next slide. We can see that in some cases partners like Boldyn, TPN and Zayo where they had an early start to the project, and had been working on some things in in advance. We're looking at being able to complete some of their conduit pools and their work in the second half of this year. Go to the next slide, Is that the okay? Oh, yeah, So as I'll just note kind of before I wrap up here that you know the oh, I'm sorry. I also wanted to mention that the MMBI Caltrans provided an update on it's rollout of pre-construction. Caltrans has continued to work on all of its design and permitting work. For the components of the project that it's building and at the last week presented a rollout of almost 4,000 miles that it will be began to be construction ready throughout 2024. So they're also making a great progress and on the work that they they've been working on over the last 2 years. And then the one other component, I'll note is that as we move to construction, the next thing we need

to be thinking about is operations. And so at the MMAC CDT committed to moving forward with a market sounding to better understand the issues of operating this network. In a manner that's sustainable and we anticipate presenting that at the April MMAC. And with that but wraps up my update.

Thank you, Mr. Monroe. I'd also like to recognize we do have Assemblymember Gipson and Dr. Mattis in the in the room so thank you for joining us today. I would like to open it up to any members that like to ask any questions regarding the Middle Mile Initiative, first going to individuals in the room. I would like to ask a quick question of you before we go to the members virtually. So, you brought up a log. Can you explain? Is it going to be updated all the time? Is there a timeframe that that's going to be available to the public? And if I'm a California or an advocacy group, how do I know if something's changed? How does that compare to what you've had last month? So I was just wondering if you could maybe answer that question for the public.

Sure, absolutely. With regards to changes, we will have the on our website we will be, the public will have access to previous versions of the map, so they can do a side-by-side comparison, and then the log will be updated on a monthly basis, as changes are made so that the public doesn't have to go in and wonder what or when they know by the last Monday of every month there will be the any updates will be posted, and they'll be able to find out where those are.

Thank you, Mr. Monroe. Are there any members online that have questions? Not online? Okay, we'll go ahead and go to thank you very much, Mr. Monroe. We'll go to 3C, which is Commissioner Houck, and we're going to hear more about the Last Mile Program updates.

Thank you. So good morning everyone. Again, my name is Darcie Houck. I'm one of the five Commissioners at the California Public Utilities Commission, and I'm pleased to be here this morning to provide an update on the Commission's Last Mile programs and related efforts. Please go to the next slide. So this slide provides a snapshot of the suite of Last Mile programs that the Commission provides as part of it, the State's multiyear broadband investment. The first column is the local agency technical assistance program which provided 50 million dollars in technical assistance grants for local and tribal governments to use for foundational work necessary to launch or expand a network. The program dedicated 45 million dollars generally and it had a 5 million dollar set aside for tribal nations as of June 30th 2023. The local technical assistance program was fully subscribed. The next column. We have the Loan Loss Reserve Fund, which, under the current budget, is allocated 750-million-dollar investment

to enable local governments and tribal governments and nonprofit entities the ability to secure financing for broadband infrastructure. It should be noted that the Governor's recently proposed budget for 2024-2025 allocates, 500 million dollars to the Loan Loss Reserve Fund again. That's a proposed amount and so we just noted that there on the slide and the PUC recently issued a decision on November the second setting forth the proposed rules and guidelines for the Loan Loss Reserve Fund, and we expect to start accepting applications by March of 2024. And I'll be talking more about this program on of upcoming slide. The PUC also administers the last mile Federal funding account, which provides roughly 2 billion dollars in grants to deliver reliable broadband and help close the digital divide and unserved communities. The goal of this program is to provide direct connection to unserved locations and end users. And I'll also provide more detail on that on the next slide. And then the last program listed, here is our California Advanced Services Fund program, which continues to serve as an important tool and supporting digital equity by assisting with funding broadband deployment through infrastructure, adoption and public housing programs. These programs further, the goal to deploy broadband and tribal, rural, urban and unserved and underserved areas within the State. The PUC administers the California Advance Services Fund, which has a budget of 75 73 million dollars for fiscal year 23-24 for fiscal year 23-25 we have requested an increase in spending authority to above 136 million dollars and again, that's money that we are currently collecting. We just don't have authority to spend. And I'll be talking more about the critical need to get that authority and the number of grants we've received in a future slide. We're reviewing comments on staff proposals that make adjustments to the broadband public housing account and the tribal technical assistance program to make them more accessible, and we hope to have a proposed decision out for comments in very shortly within the next 2 weeks, and I'll also provide additional information when I talk further about the CASF program. So if we can go to the next slide. So I am pleased to report that the first Federal funding account cycle closed on September 20, ninth and the PUC received 484 applications. An application was received for every county in the State with a total of more than 4.6 billion dollars in requests to fund last mile broadband infrastructure projects to connect unserved Californians. This unprecedented amount of interest in a PC. Grant program demonstrates the opportunity this program provides to catalyze new high speed broadband infrastructure across the State. This program will fund locations that lack a reliable wireline connection capable of 25 megabits download and 3 megabits upload. Additionally, Federal funding account projects must provide speeds of up to 100 megabits download, and 20 where that's not feasible. We received applications from all entities that were eligible

for funding, and this included facility based broadband providers, local government electric utilities, nonprofit organizations, entities with a certificate of public convenience and necessity and telecommunications, cooperatives, California tribal nations, and that includes wholly owned tribal corporations and tribal nonprofit organizations applicants proposing to connect back to the state's middle mile network are required to consult with the California Department of Technology to ensure their programs are in alignment. And there's also a point allocation within the scoring rubric for connection to the State middle mile. So currently, each FFA application project area the objections to the applications and the applicant's response to an objection are publicly available on our website. And the link is on this slide for those of you wanting to access this online. That information is all available. Please go to the next slide. So our Loan Loss Reserve program under SB 156. The Commission was tasked with designing and administering a Loan Loss Reserve Fund program for local governments, tribal governments and nonprofit entities. The program will assist local and tribal governments and nonprofits in financing the build out of their last mile broadband infrastructure and the Commission is designing this program through its CASF proceeding. And again we issued a decision on November 2nd with the rules and guidelines for that program. We are anticipating accepting applications starting in March of this year and awards are expected to be made in the second quarter of 2024 applicants should also expect information sessions and outreach to be coming out shortly. More information can be found on our website in the links is on this slide as well. So please continue to look for additional information regarding the Loan Loss Reserve Program. Next slide. So our California Advanced Services Fund, the California Advanced Services Fund continues to serve as an important tool in supporting digital equity and the goals of broadband for all. Last year the Commission continued to review and approve applications for our different accounts under the CASF program, and this year the PUC is enhancing the eligibility of our public housing account and expanding the types of projects that would be eligible for these grants. And we've received a lot of feedback, a lot of public comment on the need to expand opportunities under that program. And so we are moving forward with that. And in addition to that, as part of the same decision that I mentioned. That's going to be issued shortly regarding the rules for the public housing program. We are also expanding the tribal technical assistance program, eligibility and increasing the award threshold. So for our adoption grants the adoption account provides grants to public entities and community-based organizations for digital literacy and broadband access projects. The Commission accepted 86 grants from the July 2023 application cycle for a total of 11.6 million dollars. 2 of the applicants did

not move forward with their awards, and so we are dispersing funds for 84 grants in the amount of 11.36 million dollars. The 84 projects will provide digital literacy training to 12,004 participants. Broadband access to 14,265 participants and broadband subscriptions to 30,580 participants and it will increase broadband access and digital inclusion and low income disadvantaged communities as well as other communities facing socioeconomic barriers to broadband adoption. Our public housing and low-income communities program provides grants to build networks offering free service to low-income residents in communities such as public housing developments and farm worker housing. In the July 2023 cycle. The Commission awarded almost half a million dollars to 6 projects. These projects will provide wireline and wireless infrastructure and free broadband service to 306 living units and 538 residents of publicly supported housing across the State. Our infrastructure account provides grants to subsidize Last Mile and Middle Mile infrastructure to expand high quality communications throughout the State. On June first, we received 73 applications requesting a total of 527 million dollars. And I want to stress that, as I mentioned before, the program is funded for all of the programs under CASF for 73 million dollars. In our infrastructure, grant alone we received request for 527 million dollars. So increasing our authorization to spend, will significantly help us in being able to continue to award more grants the Commission awarded one project to Anza connect phase 3. Project for up to \$688,431, and this project will provide services to up to 10 gigabits per second, symmetrical broadband, access to 28 priority eligible households and 9 businesses and anchor institutions in the unincorporated low-income community of Mountain Center and Rural Riverside County. On January twelfth, the Commission released 2 draft resolutions for a public comment. These resolutions are 2 separate fixed, wireless projects that will receive a total of approximately 6.5 million dollars in a CASF infrastructure grants to provide symmetrical kick, butt gigabit Internet service to low-income communities. Our tribal technical assistance program provides grants to assist California tribes in developing market studies, feasibility, studies and or business plans which support tribes in their pursuit of improved communications. The Commission awarded \$720,000 to 5 tribes on December first of last year, for all 5 applications received during the October 2023 cycle. The tribes will use the funding to pursue broadband improvements within their communities through feasibility and market studies. Next slide, please. our broadband public housing account. As I previously mentioned, the Commission has proposed changes to the public housing account. and we've received comments on the staff proposal which was sent out in a November twenty-eighth ruling proposed changes include expanding eligibility to other housing developments and mobile home parks with low income residents, expanding project, eligibility and

the scope of cost of what's eligible for reimbursement in low income communities that lack access to free broadband service and providing expanded tenant protection to applicants other than public supported housing and tribal housing developments and farm worker housing, and the reason that those are referenced as other than is because those housing units already have protections given. The access to funding for those projects, this would also expand opportunities to tribally owned housing authorities as well. Next slide. So the next slide under the same proposed decision, that's going to be issued. We have proposed changes to our tribal technical assistance program, and these changes include updates to the rules and guidelines to align the tribal technical assistance program with the local agency technical assistance program that I talked about earlier. We're going to be increasing award thresholds from a hundred \$50,000 to \$250,000 and a requirement that the NTIA supported infrastructure must provide at least 25 megabits download and 3 megabits upload. increasing the non-exhaustive list of eligible activities, and also providing eligibility for tribal consortia which includes a multi-tribal organization such as regional tribal chairman's associations and any future tribal consortia that may be specifically established to work with tribes to seek technical assistance Next slide, please. So we have conducted and continue to conduct outreach to community based organizations, local and tribal governments and members of the public. We've worked closely with the California Department of Technology on conducting outreach throughout the State. We concluded a listening session in Oakland last week. We had one in LA in November. Our BEAD staff are continuing to conduct outreach, including public meetings, workshops, and webinars, to educate stakeholders on the upcoming BEAD challenge process and continue to look for more information on those events on our website. We also have commission case workers that continue to meet with public entities and new entrants to help navigate our program rules and requirements. And the email address for our broadband caseworker team is on the slide. Please feel free to reach out to them with any questions. They're there to provide support, and we are continuing to try and work with the communities to do more outreach sessions, particularly in areas we've heard that it's difficult for the public or stakeholders to participate in some of our virtual events. And last, I just want to mention that the Commission will be hosting our annual California Advanced Services Fund public workshop in spring of 2024. Please keep an eye out for the announcement and the date and we will be talking more about the changes for the public housing program during the workshop. And with that, I know that was a lot of information so I will conclude my comments.

Thank you, Commissioner Houck. I'd like to open it up to the committee members for comment. The first I see is Ms. McPeak.

Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Commissioner Houck. I actually have a one question, and then a comment. First, I want to preface all that by thanking you for your leadership and President Reynolds and the other Commissioners. That's a lot of work and a lot of progress that's been made with tremendous focus so thank you. My question goes to the 136,000,211 that has been put into the budget or in a budget proposed change by the Governor. I want to commend Governor Newsom for allowing that amount for the expenditure on the California Advanced Services Fund. So the Legislature and the and the Governor approved SB 4, which took the collections up to 150 million. The reason I'm asking a question, is it took a while, I want to acknowledge your help and Rob Osborn and Maria Ellis, so that we could figure out what was keeping us from being able to expand all of that I'm understanding. Here's my question that the 136,211,000 is for program and that the balance of the 150 million is separately programmed to support administration of that is that an accurate understanding, so that we have all 150 million authorized for expenditure this year. Okay, yes, that is my understanding as well. And we are continuing to work for throughout. But yes, we want the total amount to utilize, and you have it correct. And I do want to thank our staff for working very diligently to get all the information together needed to move that proposal forward, and also all of the work they've been doing on the various programs that I do want to acknowledge that a number of legislators also signed a letter in support of that, including, I think, Assemblymember Gipson. So that's going to lead to my comment and fair warning Assemblymember, because I want to invite you to comment. I want to acknowledge that you, Commissioner, held 2 listening sessions around the public housing account since we last met. And that's very, very helpful. We're moving to being able to use fully that resource which is huge. A lot of comments I've heard regarding deployment will focus in on Md. Use multiple dwelling units. Well, here is the resource for those publicly subsidize housing complexes, and you've even expanded the eligibility and are looking at more flexibility. So thank you for doing those listening sessions to you. Assembly member Gipson, you were a champion 2 times around, as I recall and legislation, and I hope you can see the impact of your work being a champion. This is an account that got established in 2013, with now Senator Bradford, then Chair Bradford, actually authorizing the establishment of it. And I think you're also helping reach out into your district for to for us to do a workshop. So we're out there trying to do workshops and including legislators, to bring in your constituents, so they know about this resource. So that's my comment. But I don't think we should let this occasion go by without inviting your perspective on the importance of this public housing account. Mr. Assembly member

Through the chair, Thank you very much. I appreciate the comment, and certainly for the community in which I represent, which is the 65th Assembly District. We have in my district a number of subsidized housing developments and we've worked extremely hard and Sunne, side by side, and the work that she, the incredible work that she and her colleagues have done in this space in terms of making sure that no one is left behind. We cannot have 2 Californians, one that is connected and one that is not, especially when you talk about housing developments. The Imperial Courts, the Jordan Downs, the Gonzaque Villages, or the Nickerson Gardens. During the pandemic they suffered greatly in children, a was against learn a much learning loss because of not being able to be connected because the housing development was built in a time, we have center block walls. And that is an impediment to children and their learning ability and is isolating those individuals. God forbid for us to have something like this happen again. And so these resources are extremely important to our community, and we want to make sure that everyone, especially those who live in public subsidized housing, received the kind of support that they absolutely need from these funds, and so I will continue to raise my and elevate my voices on behalf of those who live in public subsidized housing but also rural communities where they have to drive 10 miles just to be connected. And so the work that we're doing is absolutely critical and vital to Californians, and I'm grateful to see where we are right now but we still have much more to go. Thank you.

Thank you Assemblymember and thank you Ms. McPeak. Any other additional? Yes, we have Secretary Snider-Ashtari. Thank you.

I just want to commend the PUC. It looks like there's been a lot of thought put into how to meet tribes and tribal communities where they're at and provide a lot of different avenues to engage given capacity constraints. So it looks like with these programs, they're evolving in a direction that's actually workable for tribes because I'd hate to see this opportunity wasted. Because we're just not understanding. And we're not flexible enough to understand how tribes would be able to effectively engage. So just really want to congratulate you on some really thoughtful work.

Thank you Assemblymember and thank you Ms. McPeak. Any other additional. Yes, we have Secretary Snider-Ashtari.

Thank you. I just want to commend the PUC. It looks like there's been a lot of thought put into how to meet tribes and tribal communities where they're at and provide a lot of different avenues to engage given capacity constraints. So it looks like with these programs, they're evolving in a direction that's actually

workable for tribes. Because I'd hate to see this opportunity wasted. Because we're just not understanding. And we're not flexible enough to understand how tribes would be able to effectively engage. So just really want to congratulate you on some really thoughtful work.

Thank you, Secretary. Any other comments? Question? Sunne McPeak.

Again, I want to follow on the Secretary's comment about the work regarding tribes. And I've heard a couple of times, Commissioner, how propose tribal consortia? And I want to endorse that. We've all been in the same meetings in which the tribal leaders will talk about having very limited time. I mean they have other jobs, many of them are, they're managing many large programs. And there needs to be capacity building. And so I, having been a party to when Senator Padilla established the account on consortia. We funded the original ones. I just want to, you know publicly say, I think that's a great idea, and it and it will help the tribal organizations be able to build capacity to manage the other dollars that are made being made available.

Thank you. Ms. McPeak. Yes, Commissioner Houck.

I just wanted to follow up on that comment and the meeting tribes where they are. I think it's really important that we get tribal consortia in place to assist tribes that have unique needs for technical assistance, and to make sure that they're able to fully participate, we do have some tribes that are working directly with existing consortia and have very good relationships with them. So I want to recognize that the work that the consortia that are in place are doing, and where tribes are working well and have a good relationship. We also want to encourage that. But we want all of the options on the table to best serve as many tribes throughout the State as possible.

Excellent conversation and comment. I really loved the dialogue. Are there any other comments or questions from in the room? And then I will go to online cause I know we have several members participating online as well. Alright, we see none. There's always an opportunity later. So the next and last item for this particular agenda item is Ms. McPeak, and she's going to talk about the Affordable Connectivity Program update.

Thank you, Madam Chair, and we'll go to the next slide. very good. So one of the, I think, most remarkable examples of focus by this organization, and the difference it makes as was reported by Deputy Director Adams earlier, is the amount of effort under the California Broadband Council going back to the Governor's Broadband for All Executive Order and the action plan. And what's important there is that the Executive order was announced in 2019. The Action

Plan. the Executive order actually came out August 14th, 2020 an action plan at the end of that year long before any of us had ever heard about the Affordable Connectivity Program or its predecessor, the emergency Broadband benefit program. And at the time that the Governor issued this directive we were continuing to work in partnership with Internet service providers who had affordable offers, and that is what we were all directed to do. The EBB and then the Affordable Connectivity Program, to be sure, has become the preferable, the desirable and advanced promoted offer. Because the Federal Government has made it available. It's \$30 a month subsidy for low-income households, \$75 on tribal lands. It was March 2nd 2022 that this board said, we're going to march towards a 90%. Now, that was a very bold initiative, a bold move by the California Broadband Council. It's to be sure, a stretch goal but that has made all the difference in the world because it is a focus and every meeting we report. That led to the collective effort of all of the members of the Broadband Council to do a mobilization. We call get connected California. And here's the drum roll. As a Monday we are at almost 2.9 million households. So 2,863,491 or 49% of the 5.8 million eligible households in California. I do expect, by the time the freeze goes into place, February 7th, that we will be at 50%, and California has enrolled more households than any other State by over a million. We have made huge progress getting to literally an increase since we started of 60% or 18 percentage points in 2023, just the last 12 months. That's a huge lift and I think remarkably the larger California Southern California counties. Now, Imperial is smaller, but the others are very, very large in population. Collectively, they're at 56%. The San Joaquin Valley. Those 8 counties are at 50%. So and what the hallmark is in each of those cases a focus by the leadership within the region within those counties and Riverside County that has invested a couple of 1 million dollars over the last 2 years has literally had the largest increase in Southern California of it's literally over an 80% increase getting to 59% enrollment, moving 28 percentage points since they started. These numbers don't happen without focus and leadership. So that's that is the point that I wanted to make. And then we were all delighted that 15 organizations in California got grants from the Federal Communications Commission almost you know, 10% of the 6 million in outreach grants. And now we're all now sorting through. We have a freeze announced for February 7th. So going to this next slide. it'll change. Thank you.

What we found in all of this work through Get Connected! California and the mobilization and then focusing in using the resource resources we have, including the Federal Communication Commission's grant is that the most effective strategy is what we call direct notification by a credible source. So that means a public agency, a State agency, a county school, Higher education, a

tribe says to their customers who are already qualified as part of another public assistance program. For example, in the case of the Department of Healthcare Services or Counties, there's Medi-Cal because that is an automatic qualifier for the Affordable Connectivity Program. In the case of the Department of Social Services or counties, CalFresh food stamps nationally is an automatic qualifier. Higher education administers Pell grants so that is an automatic qualifier. The tribal organizations administer tribal benefits and they, for example, Tribal TANF is an automatic qualifier. If a person who is a participant in one of those programs gets a notification from a public agency, direct notification more than 80% are able to enroll themselves, which is really helpful. They just don't even know about the program per our statewide survey literally 65% of those who are eligible for ACP, therefore eligible for the affordable offers from the Internet service providers don't even know about them so that's a real challenge. But if you notify them, they'll enroll. The next thing that is needed for those 20% or so who can't enroll themselves for one reason or another. Sometimes they don't have the right paperwork or know what the right paperwork is. They may not have the language that is being spoken by someone that answered the phone or the ISP on the other end. So there needs to be assistance. That essential backbone for a seamless system is a call center and we are just very grateful to the assistance from the Public Utilities Commission for the Get Connected! Call Center to have the resources to sustain that if you will that backbone last year, because of direct notification by particularly the Department of Health Services and Social Services. But we have more than 80 other programs or campaigns as they're referred to in the business where a school district did a distribution, they have a separate QR code and telephone number, a community organization, a county. We have more than 80 of those campaigns going on today and had almost 100,000 calls through the call center as a result and if four times that is enrolling themselves, you can see the multiplier so in that effort, then what happens is it comes to a call center. People are prompted which language they need a couple of questions about their qualifications, and then they immediately have someone online, a community-based organization that does the service in language and culture who helps them. If they need in person assistance, then they get referred to an in-person event but this is about as efficient as we can be, and it actually works pretty well, especially if that customer already has their qualification through one of these other qualifying programs, because it's a really easy sign up then at the Federal FCC, ACP enrollment. We at the, under these auspices of this of this Council and throughout California, did more than 75 in-person enrollments last year. That's a lot of work for a lot of different organizations the funding that we had from the Federal Communications Commission for CETF. And ten partners was to do 50 in

person enrollment events. Only we thought we were going to have a little bit longer. We were planning to be able to go through March 31, when a January 11th announcement happened, we have been accelerating that. We think we can get to something over 30 events before February 7th. But that's hustle that we're all in, 24 will be completed by the end of this month, and we have eight more that are going to be in that first month first week of January as we sit here today and look at where we're likely to be on February 7th. We'll have 3 million California households on the Affordable Connectivity Program. It's over 21 million nationally, the question is going to be so what do we do now? The ISPs under ACP have an obligation to do notification three times to those enrolled and we hope that the Internet Service Providers will provide the information to those ACP customers about their existing affordable offers. Clearly all of us are very concerned that there be an extension of ACP. The letter that you Madam Director and President Reynolds sent to the congressional delegation is very important. We hope to have continued conversation with the ISPs interaction, so that we can help also inform our CBOs want to inform those that they enroll, but they also can do because we're likely to get a whole lot more calls through that call center about. Now, what do I do? So with that I want to go to the next slide. And just as I was saying, commend you and President Reynolds, Madam Chair, for getting that letter out in a very timely way. The California Emerging Technology Fund has now written to our entire delegation, this is an example of what we are aware of. I know it's not exhaustive. We hope that there will be a lot more letters and communications mobilization to notify our own Congressional delegation but the San Diego Digital Divide Task Force, Southern California Association of Governments, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. There is a really important bipartisan governor's letter to Congress, and then the U.S. Conference of Mayors of which we have 28 mayors in California out of the 174 that have signed. That's really important. I know that the National Association of Counties is also generating such a letter. So with that, I think we want to just open up. I'm happy to answer questions about the activity, but also invite more discussion around what we do from this point forward, trying to get emergency extension on ACP. and also how we ensure we still have affordable Internet Service Providers, because that is what on February 8th, all the calls through the call center are going to be referring to the all of our callers will be referred to the Internet Service Providers in their area. Thank you.

Thank you, Ms. McPeak. I also, as you were showing that slide, I want to commend the local leaders, the advocacy groups, the community-based organizations, the government entities, that have really been, you know, we get the word out through the committee, and I know Ms. McPeak, you've obviously

out there feet on ground, but it does take all of us to get the word out. So people are registering and applying and helping them navigate the system because it can fill difficult at times. So I just want to commend anyone that's watching or ever watches that we really do want to recognize that it does take all of us to lean in. And it was very apparent that that has been happening at you know the local level state level, the legislative level across administrations and legislator. So thank you for everyone that has been participating. I would like to open it up to any comments or questions for anyone in the room for Ms. McPeak. Alright. Lori Pepper.

Thank you. So I think this is probably one of those issues that kind of stops everything because a lot of the other work that we're doing on Middle Mile and on our Digital Equity, State Plan is really this the ACP program was really kind of a cornerstone on which we were relying. At least I was relying, as I was going through my work saying, Okay, that's there and we can continue doing and now we've done such an excellent job as a state of getting 3 million people, almost 3 million households, which is even better, yes, signed up. And the idea that now not only is there going to be confusion and probable loss of service it calls into. I don't want well, I shouldn't say it calls into question. But it it's kind of like, okay, we're building this 10,000-mile network. We're doing all this stuff to have access to broadband and broadband services but it needs to be affordable. So in that vein, I know, DMV has been very focused on digital equity as they're trying to move all their services online or as many as possible. You know, obviously, through Caltrans and high-speed rail kind of getting access points out there and Caltrans with the middle mile network. And so what I would like to do is to offer CalSTA and our departments as help in having those conversations with ISPs and seeing what are the possible solutions that we can do to work together. I have a history with well, experience in working in Congress, and I have found that there are many times well, they will, they will absolutely surprise you and come through in a big way. But I think we have to prepare for that to not happen. And so the way I see that happening is really having those conversations directly with the ISPs. And so any way that we can stand up and help, we certainly will.

That is huge Deputy Director Pepper. I really appreciate that. We I think we'll we will want to follow up, obviously in coordination with the Council. But I think this is a major opportunity. Thank you. Thank you, Lori.

Thank you, Deputy Secretary. Thank you, Ms. McPeak. Any other comments? Questions? Commissioner Houck.

I just want to commend all of the work that's been done. CETF CDT in getting the three, close to three million households and just really underscore the impact. If the funding is not extended that, that's going to have on these underserved households, and what that does mean to us meeting our goals for eliminating the digital divide in California. And just that we need to be communicating with the ISPs with each other to make sure that we continue the effort to make sure congress hears the concern. It's a bipartisan issue, so that is a good thing. But also underscore what? Deputy Director Pepper said that we need to be prepared in the event. It isn't because it's going to impact these 3 million households. And particularly, it's going to, you know, we need to make sure that they understand what it means and what happens with those awards, and it could disproportionately impact tribal communities who are getting currently 75 dollar it's applied through ACP, and so for that to stop it could have even more of an impact for those communities, if all of a sudden, they're being charged those additional amounts. So we really need to be working closely with the providers to have a plan in place so that low income families aren't adversely impacted. If we don't end up where we need to be.

Thank you, Commissioner Houck. Assemblymember Gipson.

Thank you very much. Just wanted to also add my voice to congratulating, thank you, thanking Ms. McPeak for her work for her, her focus in this particular area certainly, appreciate you being a drum major for justice in this regard, because, if not you who, you've been out there. You've been in the in the capital, knocking on doors. Raising the elevation of people in the State in this space around broadband digital divide and I just wanted to just to piggyback on with Commissioner indicated from the PUC, that these rates are so unaffordable for people in California, and we have to do everything that we can to be able to provide a lower cost rate so that individuals can just have access. And that's all it's about. It's about access to communities, that are as we look at 2024 as we celebrate us crossing over, not a lot of people crossed over. They're still dealing with traumas, still dealing with lack of access still licking, you know, dealing with trying to make ends meet. And so as we celebrate, not every California is celebrating. And so we have to go back and make sure that we bring them up and not leave them behind. So again, I want to say, thank you very much for your focus and your leadership in this space, and certainly count me as an ally, which I'm sure you have and if we need to do a joint letter within a very bipartisan way, we're very committed to doing that work. Thank you.

Thank you, Assembly member. Excellent. Any comments or questions from any members online? Not? And why this time? Okay, fantastic. Thank you everyone.

We are going to go to agenda item number 4. That is the National Telecommunication and Information Administration also known as NTIA Investment Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the IIJA broadband programs, boy, as a mouthful. But we have 2 presenters here today. We have Mr. Deputy Director Scott Adams, who will give an update from California Department of Technology, and we also have Maria Ellis from the CPUC. So first up, Mr. Adams.

Thank you, Director Bailey-Crimmins and members of the Council. It's a pleasure to give a brief update on the development of the State Digital Equity Plan. Next slide, please. So I think that the top line we kind of teed up at the beginning of the meeting is that between the October Broadband council meeting, and today we completed the draft State Digital Equity Plan and published it on the California Broadband for All portal on December 12th that would note that, you know, we've talked so much about the engagement of the last year. That plan was informed by engagement with over 50,000 California residents and stakeholders, and really a result of the collaborative efforts of folks in this room, and folks that are also online in this meeting to thank them. I'll note that on the 45-day public comment period, is still open, although it closes tomorrow, so there's still time for residents and stakeholders to provide common and further shape the Digital Equity Plan, next slide, please. Something that we wanted to share with you and thank you to Assembly member Gipson and Secretary Snider-Ashtari and all of the folks who have continued to elevate that all of the work that we do is through the lens of equity. And then the digital equity plan itself is focusing on those most vulnerable among us that you know 8 covered populations that were called out in the NTIA's digital equity, one that the Digital Equity Act in the notice of funding opportunity for the plan itself. But it goes beyond to other populations in California and given that equity and inclusivity were part of the development of the planning process. We wanted to make sure to embed that in the public comment process itself. So we've got a snapshot up here of how we posted the digital equity plan on the portal. It was both as a PDF format, which is in English. But we created an all text HTML version into the website itself. That enabled us to be fairly creative and very inclusive. When the plan, when viewed that way, is available in over a hundred different languages. Which really enables a lot of individuals that we've engaged with, and that the plan focuses on to read the plan and review its draft. If we go to the next slide. We also developed a Digital Equity Plan public comment form that embedded the or embedded the same, you know, kind of equity considerations into that and that the form can also use the translation function and the form itself, and the sections can be translated into over a hundred different languages, and that for functionality for folks of different ability or

potentially you know other considerations. We've worked with our internal team to embed a voice to text functions so that individuals and residents can speak their comments directly into the form itself, and then they can be visualized as written comments on the portal in this submitted comments page, so we're proud of that. And thankful to the many partners within the State that advised us on including a number of these considerations. Next slide, please. We also wanted to point out is that we know that California has a very engaged and informed and knowledgeable ecosystem, and that many of our partners and stakeholders would want to have more detailed and granular information that inform the development of the plan. So I just want to point out that we created sections on the portal that included meeting recordings, notes, artifacts, summaries of the various you know, different work streams that inform the planning process so that they're there, for the folks would like to see, you know, sort of the inputs that inform the draft output. Next slide, please. So really wanted to give you just an idea of where we're at right now on this day. So in terms of outreach and engagement, we wanted to make sure that as many of the folks that we'd engage with during the development of the plan, and those who may not have heard about it could, so we've sent out 5 separate notifications to our 10,000 plus resident partner, stakeholder database. We've developed an outreach toolkit that we made available in 7 different languages. We hosted partner and stakeholder, webinar to really walk through the process on December 15th, that was intended by 170 or 167 individuals. We've given presentations at various entities like the So-Cal Transformation group, a meeting that was hosted online in LA County at the California Telehealth Coalition and we reopen the Digital Equity Ecosystem Mapping tool. And I just like to say that that outreach and engagement wasn't just ours. You know, we built this network. And really, have been so encouraged by the work that folks have done at the Broadband Council and State level, tremendous amplification support, you know Christina Mattis, at the Department of Education has been very active in promoting it out to various county offices of education at the regional and local level, the broadband consortia's and metropolitan planning organizations like the Capital Corridor consortia and LA Deal and SKAG and SANDAG have been fantastic. And then beyond that the various advocacy groups and digital equity coalitions to really show AARP of California has been amazing at promoting this out to their Statewide membership to ensure that you know, aging until 60 are over if have a voice in this process, and seen a lot of resident comments come in from them. And just really want to commend the other umbrella organizations like CADE and California Community Foundation, and Oakland Undivided and others who have made it a point to promote the draft plan and the public comment process out to their members. And so, where we're at today, this

morning, as of 6:30 and our staff, these numbers have changed some since then, but as of this morning we had 160 total public comments 134 were from residents. And, like you said, a very significant percentage of those are from aging individuals who identify 60 or above, 26 different organizations have wait in and submitted public comment. Through the public comment form and we've received 7 additional responses to the digital equity ecosystem map of entities that may not have been including in the draft line. But want to make sure that their organizations and their work is seen in the States asset inventory. So just thanks to everyone. And a reminder that public comment period closes midnight tomorrow night. So there's still time, and we would encourage folks who want their voice to be heard, and further shape the plan to please do so. And that's my report.

Thank you, Mr. Adams. Are there any comments?

Actually, I'm sorry, that is not my report. Oh, okay. Just real quick. Yeah, I know. We've heard from a lot of like next steps are really important. So when the public comment period closes, want to make sure folks know that our staff is going to be working diligently to review all public comments, and great those that are within our jurisdiction and our ability in the NTIA framework. To further shape the Plan, we will submit the final Plan the NTIA for an official curing process. That Plan will include an appendix of all the public comments received and which public comments have led to revisions in the Plan, and which page numbers in the Plan, you know, those revisions have been made. After the curing process, we will publish the final Digital Equity Plan. Sometime in the second quarter of next year the capacity grant, Notice of Funding Opportunity will come out where the State will be able to apply for its allocation of the 1.44 billion dollars to implement the Plan, and then, what we'll follow will be competitive grant Notice of Funding Opportunity. So sorry that now concludes my presentation.

You have quarter 2 for the Capacity Grant NOFO, is that, do I recall that correctly?

You do recall. That is what that depicts.

Okay? Cause I heard also next year. But this is this is this year right?

I mean yes, it's January. If I misspoke, I did intend to meet that in the second quarter of this year.

I could be lost in the year I am lost in the year ,when here's the point I'm the question I really want to ask, though, is, if that's the timing for NTIA. When do they actually plan to fund states with capacity grants? And then when do you think that will be available to fund to make investments in the Digital Equity Plan.

Yeah, I think it's a really good present question. And I know it's something that's on the top of a lot of folks mind. I would hesitate to speculate, because the process that just as we here in California have this huge responsibility implemented a very large plan in a short period of time. They're also managing that. So I don't want to get ahead of the NTIA. Just I think it's safe to say that when the last State finishes their Digital Equity Plan, we've been told that the Notice of Funding Opportunity would come out that there would be a period where they would allow States to apply and then review those applications. And then. You know, States would need some time to be able to develop or adjust their capacity grant programs to conform to the rules and requirements. You know, outlined in the NOFO and beyond the dates and timeline that we put up there. I would hesitate to add more specificity. I'd rather come to you at the next meeting with more information.

Perfectly fine, because nobody can guess really what's going to go on. I know I but I think you also answered a really important question. I've been asked by my own directors and some legislators, which is their the after the NOFO, there will need to be another application. The digital that is consistent with the digital equity plan, but the digital equity plan doesn't constitute the application for the capacity grant. Am I understanding that correctly?

I understand that beyond the final submission and approval of the of the of States digital equity plans. there will be some formal administrative process, which has yet to be defined. So I'd hesitate to report on that.

Thank you Ms. McPeak for your question. All right, Dr. Mattis.

Good morning everybody and thank you so much. Mr. Adams, thank you so much for your collaborative efforts on the Equity Plan and Ms. McPeak, it has been truly a pleasure seeing you steering the ship on ACP. In recent conversations with our local education agencies, we did note that the reference of ACP is throughout the Equity Plan and I wanted to share that there is a thirst and hunger to join together in collective efforts to voice the need to continue this program. And so I look forward to continue working with each of you along with other Council members to help communicate what we can do as a collective to share to Congress and elsewhere that local agencies, education agencies, do want to make sure that each and every student is connected not only at school, but also at home, so that they can have those equitable high quality access to technology. Thank you.

Thank you, Doctor Mattis. It's always great to have a voice of education, a champion in the room. Any other comments or questions from members in the

room? Are there any online? None online? Okay. We'll go ahead and go to Maria Ellis who is going to be giving an update on BEAD?

Hello! Good morning Council members. Thank you for having us today. I'm going to be providing an update on their Broadband Equity Access and Deployment program otherwise known as BEAD. As refresher, back in June the Federal National Telecommunications and information Administration, NTIA, allocated 1.8 billion dollars to California for the implementation of this program. We're happy to report that since the last time that we presented to you that California Public Utilities Commission has submitted their initial proposal to NTIA, which is a requirement of this program. The initial proposal is split up into two volumes, Volume one and which deals with the challenge process and Volume two, which deals with sub grantee selection. Those were submitted on time to NTIA on December twenty-seventh and we are now in the process of working with NTIA and waiting on their approval of that of that document. Where this is part and parcel of, you know, major component of CPUC's work towards developing and establishing rules. This before it was submitted to NTIA, the draft initial proposal and both volumes were made public for public comment for 30 days. We received and it's part of the rulemaking, the proceeding number 2302016 and we received 20 sets of initial comments from different organizations and entities and parties and received 16 sets of reply comments. So in the next slide, I'm going to talk to you a little bit about what's coming up next, and some of the key milestones that we'll be working on throughout the year here and as mentioned, you know, we there was a lot of work that led up to the development and submission of the initial proposal, including a lot of engagement and partnership with CDT, tribal consultations, various proceeding related engagements, including workshops, public participation hearings and the like. And since now that we're in that process of working with NTIA to evaluate and waiting on their approval. One note about that is that NTIA plans to review Volumes one and two sequentially, that is to say, that they will work with the State to cure and provide feedback on Volume one, and must first approve volume one before they move on to Volume two, and this is an important note, because it is the approval of Volume two that will trigger the 365 days that the State will have to complete and deliver it to NTIA what's called a final proposal, and this final proposal must include a roll up of all selected the outcomes of our sub grantee selection process if you will the selected and proposed sub grantee awards. And so if we are looking into our crystal ball, as we say, NTIA, we're not quite NTIA hasn't stated specific dates and timelines for their approval but we are, we are thinking that approval for Volume one may come sometimes towards the latter part of February and that we anticipate that perhaps because Volume 2 is much more in-depth and complex that that

may come sometime in May. So that would mean that if we were approved, let's say again, this is just a guess, but if we were approved in May 2024, that our May fifteenth, let's say 2024, that our initial pro final proposal would be due May fifteenth, 2025 so we would have one full year to both to complete that sub grantee selection process. One other note after we even though these have been submitted to NTIA, they are still considered draft until they are both approved by NTIA and also approved adopted by the Commission through action. One of the things to keep in mind as well is that we will be doing some outreach and engagement coming up soon as it relates to the challenge process we want to, since that will be the first thing out of out of the gate. The challenge process is a way to the NTIA will provide, and if FCC will provide a map of eligible locations for funding through BEAD. And the purpose of the challenge process is to challenge the geographies and the designations listed in that map and NTIA has outlined a very specific process with and allowed some moderate modifications which the CPUC has proposed within their Volume one and depending on what they approve for our Volume one, that will be the outline and the process that the State must use for their challenge process. So we want to be able to provide some engagement, outreach learning to our partners and stakeholders so that they could understand and be ready for how to participate in that process. And you can expect that we will start ramping up, probably, and getting some information ready here in Q One but likely we will start that in earnest after we know that we have received approval for Volume One once we know exactly what NTIA is going to allow under that under that paradigm and really get folks ready to participate in that. In addition, once we get Volume 2 approved, we'll start that we will launch a sub grantee selection process and a couple of notes on that is that we will be working in earnest in a really tight timeline. This is a pretty significant program as you all know, 1.86 billion. It's very comparable to the excellent work that's being done under SB 156 but the Federal Government has provided just a shorter timeline to accomplish some similar some similar goals and achievements. And so we will be busy here at the State, but certainly we'll continue to work and partner with our partners here at CDT and leverage some of the good work that they're doing, which we see the digital equity work and the broadband equity and deployment work really aligned. That concludes my presentation but I'm happy to take some questions.

Thank you, Deputy Director Ellis. Excellent update. Opening up to any members that have questions or comments. Ms. McPeak.

Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you Maria for that presentation. The sequence you said there, it's sequential, Volume one, Volume two. I've been paying

attention to Volume 2 and I want to invite actually, because Deputy Director Adams told me to, but it was on page one nine, page 90, you have a really important discussion on affordability and, in fact, address what has been but historically was looking to \$40 a month as an affordable offer, and then acknowledging ACP and \$30 so perhaps, you know, could you all just expand on that? And in the meantime, while we're waiting between Volume one to be approved, and then volume 2, what will you be doing on any of the BEAD work? And then is that same approach being applied to the other infrastructure accounts, such as FFA or California Advanced Services Fund? And perhaps then, as I'm asking the question, perhaps Commissioner Houck wants to also comment but I'm really sort of trying to understand how much you're able to do at what at what point in time as the Public Utilities Commission, to advance this conversation around affordable, an affordable offer or offers.

Well, if the Commissioner has comments, I'd certainly want to defer to the Commissioner first and then I'm happy to follow on.

I'll just preface and then turn it over to Maria to respond but we recognize that this is a critical issue, and that we need affordable plans. We've discussed it in Volume two, as you mentioned, we're talking about it in our CASF programs. It's part of the discussion In regards to the public housing program in particular, and the work we're doing there. I will again just state that, as you can see from the presentation earlier today and Maria's presentation, we are doing a lot. We're trying to ramp up. We've been doing some hiring, but it is a heavy lift, and I think our staff are doing an excellent job given all of all of the work that we're doing and we're working closely with the California Department of Technology on all of these issues. They are obviously also looking at the affordability issues as part of their equity plan. And so, as others have mentioned, we all need to be coming together to reinforce how we're going to have a program that's going to make sure everybody in California is connected.

Thank you, Commissioner. So following up on that, one note is the Volume two proposal is that is just that until it is one approved by NTIA, and we have to incorporate any changes that they request that are within the parameters of the NOFO Notice of Funding Opportunity, and of course, also, the Commission must also take action to approve and advance this work as it relates to volume 2. But yes, the BEAD initial proposal does contemplate affordability in a couple of different ways. There is one a there is a low-cost option. That has to be available to all, a middle-class portable service option excuse me, that must be available to all customers and as well as a low-cost broadband service option and that has to cost no more than I believe, \$35 a month generally speaking. So there's both of those programs in tandem kind of our approach to address this

so a little bit on the middle-class affordability one that is around \$84 a month, which was indexed specifically to FCC benchmark and the middle-class income benchmark here for California. And then, in addition to that, you know, we have proposed a rubric. If you look at our initial proposal, and in the context of really other states, we are highlighting and centering affordability as the main component as is reflected in the proposed scoring rubric. That is our largest category, and you will see that we have up to 35 points for available for end-to-end fiber projects that offer gigabit speed that would that would charge no more than \$55 per month. And then that's the highest right that you can get all 55 points if you are committing to charging more than \$55 a month, and then for other projects that are not fiber, we've got 35 points awarded for 120-megabit plans, and that would cost no more than \$35 a month. And again, that's we are allowing some flexibility for providers to propose how they would want to do this work in terms of their pricing but that is we're trying to incent affordability through that scheme.

Thank you, Deputy Director Ellis and also Commissioner Houck. Are there any other questions or comments from members in the room regarding the Last Mile BEAD program? Are there any online? Not online? Okay, we're going to go ahead and go to the last agenda item which is a 2024 meeting schedule change or potential change. At the last meeting, we did vote to have our schedule codified in 2024 but we also heard several members mention that we do want potentially to look at a downtown location which would make it more convenient for members to be able to participate, especially a lot is going on in that area so what I want to do is turn it over to Mr. Adams to tee up a conversation, a staff recommendation, and potentially a motion to vote for a change.

Thank you, Director Bailey-Crimmins and members of the Council. So as the Director mentioned, you know, we tried to be sensitive to member requests at the last meeting to find a location closer to the Capitol to make it easier for members to attend. We really did a fairly exhaustive effort to find available space on the same day, at the same time that had a dais large enough to, you know, accommodate the 12-member body that we have here, and we were unable to do that. So first, I'd like to note before we get to the staff recommendation as a contingency. We have been able to reserve this location on the dates that we had voted on but what we would like to do is walk you through the what we were able to find out and potentially, you know, and present this to you as a run recommendation and how we can move closer to the Capitol. So if we could go to the next slide. We were able to find a location closer to the Capitol very close to the capital indeed. The caveat that it is on

the Tuesdays the same way that we had scheduled the remaining meeting. So it would be the fourth Tuesday of every month. The meeting dates that would be proposed there. April 23rd, April 23, July 23, and October 22 doing our legwork we tried to accommodate what we thought were member potential concerns. For example, we're aware that Senate utilities of commerce committee meets on the first, third, and fifth Tuesdays of every month. We think we've been able to, you know, thread the needle here with the fourth Tuesdays of the month. But what we'd like to present to you that if you would like to move forward with a venue closer to the Capitol that these are the dates that we would be able to accommodate.

Thank you, Mr. Adams, so there really is 2 options in front of the committee is to remain status quo.. A status quo is the fourth Wednesday of every month, and we would we've been able to work with Covered California, and have it at this facility. Also, in front of the committee is another option which would be moving into the fourth Tuesday, which would allow us to be downtown right next to the Capitol. And it sounds like you did make sure that it did not conflict with the Senate Energy Utilities hearings cause that would be something we don't want to do as well. So there's 2 items in front of us. I'd like to first open it up if there's any discussion from any of the members, either online or in the room before we would actually will ask. And because there's 2 options, we actually do a vote by committee member if that's okay. So first, I'd like to, is there any questions comments from any of the members regarding what's in front of us?

Is there anyone online? Oh, I'm sorry. Yes, doctor, yes.

I'm curious if the time of the meeting will remain the same on the fourth Tuesday of every month.

Good question. It is our intention to maintain the same time. But if we go to a vote, we want to narrow the scope of the vote to the date, because every time we might have to change something we vote on, we would have to. It would just be easier that way.

Thank you, Mr. Adams. Any other further discussion with the dais? Anyone online have a just any items or any discussion they want to have? Yes, Deputy Director Flores.

Did I miss? Did you mention what the venue was downtown?

We also did not mention the venue, because we want to know the scope of the vote so that, you know, if for some reason we have to change, we don't have to come back and vote, I think it's a venue that if folks change to do it would satisfy.

Thank you, Deputy Director for the question.

Any other discussion on this item? I see none so we will go to the vote. Why don't we go ahead if it's okay, do you want to start online? Oh, we well, we have 2 options. What? I? I guess we can. Is there a motion for a recommendation of one of the options in front of us?

Happy to motion to for the option to move downtown. Okay, Director Kenney, I'll second.

Alright. I have a second. All right. So we will go and have everyone vote if that's okay this one.

Thank you. Members in favor of the motion, please say aye. Not in favor of the motion, please say nay. I'll go down the list. State Chief Information Officer and Director Bailey-Crimmins.

Aye.

Commissioner Houck.

Aye.

Deputy Director Green.

Aye.

Dr. Kristina Mattis.

Aye.

Chief Deputy Director Kenney.

Aye.

Deputy Secretary Pepper.

Aye.

Ms. McPeak.

Aye.

Deputy Secretary Flores.

Aye.

Mr. Chisom.

Aye.

Secretary Snider-Ashtari.

Aye.

Senator Bradford. I'll circle back.

Assemblymember Gipson.

Aye.

Senator Bradford. In this case, Ms. Sarah Smith.

Aye.

Thank you. Madam Chair, the motion passes unanimously.

Thank you. Appreciate the recommendation and the members voting will hopefully make that more convenient for everyone especially since a lot of our meetings are downtown. Okay, that concludes at least the formal agenda. We are now moving to public comment so Ms. Nguyen if you go ahead and please provide public comment guidelines and begin that process.

Thank you, Madam Chair. To ensure everyone who wishes to make public comment has the opportunity to do so, we respectfully request one person per entity in 2 minutes per person to make public comment. The order of public comment will be as followed: in person public comments, Zoom or phone-in comments, and I will read any emailed comments submitted prior to the meeting. For in person comments, please form a line at the podium. If you haven't already signed for Zoom, please use the raise hand feature in the lower tool bar. For phone, please press star 9 to raise your hand and be recognized. You also, for in person comment, you notice that there is a timer in front of you for 2 minutes. Please be aware of that and our staff will press start once you start speaking. Alright. Here you go.

Good morning. My name is Patrick Messac, and I'm here today to uplift racial and digital equity for my neighbors in East Oakland and for high poverty, black and brown, urban, rural, and tribal communities across the State. This Council was established in 2010 to oversee broadband deployment in underserved communities and there has never been a more important time for this Council to bend the arc towards justice. Make no mistake inaction constitutes redlining. Between now and the next time this committee meets, the CPUC will award 2 billion dollars in FFA Last Mile grants and publish a BEAD broadband map that will determine eligibility for the next \$2 billion. To be clear, this imminent generational investment dwarfs CASF. FFA and BEAD constitute an investment 8,000 times bigger than the cost of public housing account expenditure from this

year and my community cannot afford to wait for a more convenient season. National and State broadband maps are both alarmingly inaccurate, erasing concentrated need in the most disconnected communities in the State. We know this from over 300,000 tests we've run over the last 60 days that show that one in three actively paying subscribers in Oakland do not reach speeds that constitute broadband not to mention the thousands of donut holes that have no option at all. Where the CPUC's mapmaking is particularly egregious is how it takes a bad national map and makes it discriminatory. Director Green, last time you asked the CPUC if they had made changes to the map? The answer is unequivocally, no. We did an evaluation of the CPUC's process for making a map in Alameda County. From this national map, they added about 16,000 locations. Of those 16,000 locations, 12,000 were in the richest, most connected communities. That's 8 times as much as the poor communities this money's intended to serve. I implore you to let the CPUC know that you are watching which communities get the \$2 billion in FFA Last Mile grants, and which communities are prioritized on the BEAD map which we are concerned will replicate the same pattern of discrimination. Thank you.

Thank you for the public comment.

Hello, everyone! My name is Diego Rodriguez, Oakland resident born and raised there, raising my kids there. They attend the schools. I'm also part of a grass roots organization called Homies Empowerment, which serves the community in many different ways. Just yesterday we had a food distribution where we give out fresh produce and vegetables out to the community that really needs it. Our communities are hurting and many different things as the pandemic is concluding, and a lot of the support and services have also concluded and gone away with. I just really wanted to take the time to share out that I spent some time with my community while they waited to get their produce and ask them like, Do you guys really need Internet? Or do you really care? Do you really want it in our neighborhoods? And everyone said, it's a need, you know. I had the privilege to speak with some parents, which I want to uplift some of those voices when they said, you know, I might not personally use the Internet. I might not be familiar with it. Sometimes, as I'm learning this the English language may, navigating those types of systems and things might be a little difficult. But what I do know is that my kids need the access, right? As a community member that lives in this neighborhood, I work 5 minutes away. I am where I am, and I stand where I stand that our businesses and local businesses also need to be able to connect and keep up and be competitive. It doesn't matter the size. It doesn't matter if they're a big company or not, but they have dreams that are deserving to be supported with good infrastructure and access to Internet. Thinking of the

elders, I know I got a few seconds but we have about 27,000 people that signed up for the ACP program that's going to be concluding and for them to get a message that says at a minimum, you're going to have to pay more or this is going to conclude, isn't okay. So thank you for your time.

Thank you for the comment. Ms. Nguyen, are there any other public comments in the room?

I do not see any more in the room but we can always circle back if there's more lining up. Next, we will hear comments from Zoom via hands raised. For call in, please press star 9. I'm going down the list that I'm seeing here. Dr. Krystal Rawls.

Hi, good still morning for us here in California. I want to thank Ms. McPeak for her comments on the importance of the ACP program and add my comments to hers and to Ms. Lori Pepper's that as a Cal State University, Dominguez Hills Workforce Integration Director, as we've promoted ACP as a trusted community partner allowing this to go away now, impedes you all of the investments that have been made in all of our digital equity steps thus far, and it also impugns our standing as a trusted community partner, as we've helped support bringing people to the table. If they can't trust what we've told them that this benefit is available and that we're going to help them, then all of our efforts going forward will be compromised. Thank you for your time and thank you for the work that you've all done thus far to get us where we are.

Next, Lili Gangas.

Hi, can you hear me okay?

Yes, we can.

Great! Hi, my name is Lilibeth Gangas. I'm the Chief Tech Technology Community Officer at the Kapor Foundation where we focus on building more equitable pathways into the tech economy across the U.S. and specifically, we have been working in our headquarters out in Oakland, California, and my comment is here is to support and the fact Oakland's application for \$14 million dollars to expand high speed access to the States, especially the highest need areas that are highest poverty least connected. As you may be aware, there have been notices that AT&T Comcast has petitioned the State to block Oakland's funding, especially in these public houses and we want to make sure that we are not limiting the intergenerational investment that is really needed and urgent for our community and the future generations we have. Oakland has received and awarded the Oakland the EDA Re compete, which is really focused on creating new jobs in the in our community that are so needed, especially out in East Oakland, and without having this infrastructure

connectivity now, especially to help build the infrastructure and access, we won't be able to have our community really participate in all of the wealth creation and job opportunities that is needed that are that is coming from these tech pathways, especially as we think about the how fast artificial intelligence is already changing the landscape, not just in the Bay Area, but across the world. Not being able to have some of this basic connectivity is going to set us back for generations so I hope that you all can take what you've heard from the community members that have spoken today to really make sure that you are being very wise, and that we are being very just to make sure that we're providing investments with an equitable lens and prioritizing it in the areas that needed the most, starting out in East Oakland. Thank you.

Thank you. We have Ulises Zatarain.

Yes. Hello! Can you guys hear me?

Yes, we can.

Hi! Good morning. Thank you. My name is Ulysses Zatarain. I'm the Executive Director for Tech Exchange. I also want to commend and acknowledge the CPUC and the CDT for putting forward this Digital Equity Plan and all of the community stakeholders and partners that have been a part of the planning process. It's definitely a very ambitious undertaking. And I appreciate the enthusiasm that all of my partners that are there today and that are commenting that are passionate about the issues that the plan is addressing. So I also wanted to comment specifically today on some of the efforts mentioned in the plan around digital literacy access, technical support and wrapping up our digital literacy training efforts throughout the State that as the plan unfolds into execution mode that we really think about supporting those trusted messengers and those trusted organizations at a local level. Digital literacy classes and also even workforce development programs to introduce our young people to STEM careers and tech careers. And I really want to emphasize that because there is plenty of local organizations like Tech Exchange that have been providing the services on our in our case, we've been doing this for 29 years, working to bridge the digital divide and providing digital equity services and programs primarily in the Bay Area and rooted in Oakland. But now we have expanded to a number of different counties and in large part definitely thanks to some of these cast of grants and CPUC grant programs that have been introduced that we hope to continue to build on and having success in the future, particularly the device inclusion programs I think those have been incredibly successful. Just to note in the past from the spring of 2023 up to now, when we kind of loosen some of the pandemic restrictions, we saw a huge

demand, and folks wanted to take classes just in Oakland alone with over 480 graduates coming through our doors successfully completing the eight-hour digital literacy classes and then receiving a device so I think that is a great program. And I hope to continue to build on it and supporting again locally trusted organizations like Tech Exchange to implement those and then, similarly, on the on the digital navigation outcomes and digital navigation staffing plans throughout the State that similarly, that the State continued to trust and rely on again, trusted community-based organizations to be those voices for digital navigation efforts moving forward. I think that and rather than recreating a plan, I think, is relying on those digital equity-based organizations to continue to do that digital navigation work that is vital for the digital equity to come into fruition. Thank you very much for your time.

Thank you. Next, we have Lindsey Skolnik.

Good morning. Can you hear me?

Yes, we can.

Excellent. My name is Lindsey Skolnik, I'm here representing the California Lines for Digital Equity, a statewide coalition of nonprofit philanthropic and academic organizations united by a belief that access to the Internet is a civil right, not a luxury. First, I'd like to express CADE's gratitude to Governor Newsom for making good on his commitment to propose full funding for the MMBI in his January budget proposal, proposing an additional 1.5 billion for the MMBI is a critical step towards reaching our collective goal of Broadband for All. As we all know, this is going to be a very challenging budget year, and not every worthy investment will be possible. As the difficult deliberations on the budget begin, we ask each of you, as members of the California Broadband Council, to join us in urging the Legislature to make the MMBI investment a top priority this year. Second, we want to state that equally important to the funding itself is prioritizing spending these funds first where they are needed most. To do that, we need to be clear about the details of the digital divide. There is abundant research that documents that income and race are the best predictors of broadband access far and above any rural versus urban split. According to USC and CETF's recent survey, in cities and rural communities alike, Latinx residents lag behind white residents in broadband connectivity by 10%. Black residents lag behind white residents in by 7% and there's a 25% gap between Native American residents and white residents. Additionally, 19% of low-income people across this front, connected or under connected compared to just 4% of residents who are not low income. It is critical that we use these facts. The facts of these racial and incoming inequities to drive MMBI funds to the least connected communities in

every geography across the State. Lastly, I'd also like to briefly comment on the draft Digital Equity Plan. While there are multiple elements for the plan and CADE will be formally submitting comments on, one key area is data and mapping. In its current form, the Plan states that CDT aims to evolve CPUC and CDT maps. This is simply not enough. We urge CDT to seek a complete transformation of the maps utilizing community provided data. This will undoubtedly give the State more precise and accurate data points that will reinforce the groundwork for equitable infrastructure development. CADE partners stand ready to work with you on such an effort to ensure that every California resident has high quality, affordable broadband they deserve. Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide comment.

Thank you. Next, we have Georgia Savage.

Great! Good morning Council members and State partners. My name is Georgia Savage, and I'm the Deputy Director of Oakland Undivided. Alongside digital equity advocates and marginalized communities across the State, Oakland extends our deepest gratitude to Assemblymember Bonta and the Legislative Black Caucus for their leadership to ensure that the entire 10,000-mile network can be actualized. We'd also like to thank Governor Newsom for taking the critical step to include the 1.5 billion dollars of funding in this year's budget to keep promises made to communities that have been left behind by public and private investments for decades. While the Digital Equity Plan in reference today urges the expediting the construction and the development of the MMBI. Given this new development, we strongly urge the State to utilize the remaining secured funding to instead prioritize connecting the lowest income, least connected communities that cannot afford to wait like East Oakland. For several years, innovative providers have come to us with the goal of expanding access in Oakland's lowest income, least connected communities. However, they all shared that this was determined unfeasible from a budget perspective, as backhaul in Oakland is shockingly 5 to 10 times as expensive as more competitive markets, which is why the pricing of Middle Mile network, especially in low revenue density communities, is so critical. There is a threat of underutilization of the network if the pricing structure doesn't incentivize municipalities and innovative community-based providers to build out in neighborhoods where margins are thin and perhaps unattractive to shareholders. The most effective mechanism to expand access in these communities is CDT's unilateral authority to establish a differential pricing structure. In consultation with network experts and legal counsel, we propose that CDT offer reduced rates based on the type of client and the location of the access point. First, for location, we recommend differential pricing apply to

communities that are either CalEPA's designated disadvantaged community, and/or in the top 2 quartiles of the socioeconomic vulnerability index or SVI. Next, the type of client, we recognize that municipalities and nonprofits prioritize people and not profit and both of these entities should have free access to the network within priority communities with applicable stranded caps. Additionally, community-based residential ISPs that offer a low-cost plan should be charged reduced rates or zeroed out license fees for at least 5 years. In short, the revenue generated from the network and California's wealthiest communities should be used to subsidize the communities this network is intended to serve. Thank you and we look forward to continued partnership.

Thank you. Next, we have Jim Luttjohann.

Thank you. Can you hear me now?

Yes, we can.

Hi, as said my name is Jim Luttjohann. I'm President and CEO of Love Catalina Island. We're the Tourism Authority Chamber of Commerce and Film Office for Catalina Island and I also happen to be Chair of the Connectivity Group grassroots organization that has been working since 2017 to try and improve island Internet and cellular service. It is often a misunderstanding out there in the world that we are a community of wealthy, privileged Anglo folks, and that is absolutely not the case. The 3,800 residents on the island are predominantly working-class Hispanics, many of whom don't even speak English as a as a first or primary language and often Avalon, in particular, has been just left off of any of the maps. I'll just leave it to say that everything that I've heard said by our counterparts in Oakland regarding the inaccuracy of the maps and the speed tests is exponentially experienced by all of us here on the island, and I would plead for any allocation of funds that can be made specific to the most rural and most remote locations like us, despite our being in an otherwise perceived urban setting of LA County and I thank you for your time.

Thank you. Next we have Robert Asquith.

Hi, my name is Robert Asquith. I live in Tuolumne County and I've noticed that several of the presentations had links. They were actually placeholders for links. We could not see the links. Would you please publish the links from the various presentations? Thank you.

Thank you for your comment. Next we have Josie Covarrubias. I'm sorry.

No worries. Yes, my name is Jose Covarrubias, and I live here in Salinas, California. I've been here since '99. I work for different agencies. One was the

Monterey County Office of Education. I worked in the Migrant Education Department, where there were 26,000 at that time identified migrant families which include like different programs. Some of them were like the technology programs and graduation programs and some programs that were online so my job as an IT person was to go out and provide the connections for them, and a lot of times the service out there was very bad, and that's in the South County and that's like in the King City area, San Andreas and also Bradley. There are, basically farm workers and students that are already graduated that are continuing their education and it continues to be a problem. In addition to that, I have my own business, and I've been working outside of Monterey County with the San Bernadino County and the rural areas. There's a strong need for businesses, because most of them are just having a network within their company just in one building as opposed to having it in the cloud and part of my job is to help migrate small businesses up to the cloud. And I see that being a problem which they can't join in because of that. It's a problem with the connection of Internet and the infrastructure. And lastly, I'd like to know how a small business like myself could go out and help the community locally, so that I can help them achieve the mission of closing the digital divide gap not only with students in Monterey County but also with farm worker parents who also need access, and seniors and students with disabilities. I have found that some of the businesses are being closed also due to COVID, and they weren't able to pay their bills because they had to be paid online. So you have all these seniors running to people in desperate need of Internet access and actually having someone else physically log in and make payments in their bills. And that includes my mother, who also doesn't have Internet access, who's a senior in Morgan Hill. So I applaud you all for your efforts. Your missions, your values, your objectives that you all accomplish. They say a lot to California. I'm very proud of California, and I like to support Governor Newsom and all of you in that same mission you have. Thank you.

Alright. We have one last comment from Zoom from Trish Kelly.

Thank you so much and thank you for the Council members for the opportunity to comment. We manage the Connected Capital Area Broadband Consortium in the capital region, and we also manage the Capital Region Coalition for Digital Inclusion. And I wanted to comment especially on the timeliness of the submittal for the to the Congressional delegation by CDT and the PUC to continue the Affordable Connectivity Program. As noted, this is an extremely critical program to reach our community members. We've been doing a great deal of outreach in the community. We've built the infrastructure working through a partnership ramp with the California Emerging Technology Fund to

help train digital navigators to work with our CBO's to communicate with our elected officials and our jurisdictions about the importance of getting people enrolled. We've had several enrollment events. We do the tracking with the CDT CETF tracker every month and get generally issue call to action in our community, and we work closely with our congressional delegation, who are strong advocates for the program. So as with noted by an earlier speaker, we've promoted the ACP as a trusted community partner, and it's really critical to be able to implement the goals of our consortium and coalition work and to meet the goals of the State Digital Equity Plan. So this is really a critical need to try to keep the funding going. We don't want to break faith with our community members. It's very challenging to get the members of the community enrolled, the eligible participants, and there's a lot of challenges as the if the FCC starts the wind down process. So we really appreciate and encourage great advocacy from the State to help us continue this important program and thank you for the opportunity to comment on the State Digital Equity Plan. We'll be submitting comments so thank you.

Thank you. We have 3 emailed public comments that I will be reading. First one came from Anokhi Mehta from Oakland Youth Commission. My name is Anokhi Mehta and I am on the Youth Commission for the City of Oakland. I represent district 4, and am very passionate about widespread, equitable access to internet services. I am writing to ensure that this once-in-a-generation funding reaches the communities it is intended to serve. I am concerned that your maps do not properly show communities in need, as there is hard evidence certain districts do not have proper access to broadband services. Specifically, International Blvd, whose services were completely cut, requires this infrastructure. Oakland youth deserve the essential tool of technology without being affected by the city they live in. The State of California must act now to increase digital equity and take care of its citizens in need. Thank you. Next comment came from Brian Ibarra Morales, Oakland Youth Commission. My name is Brian Ibarra Morales and I am on the Youth Commission for the City of Oakland. I represent District 7. I am writing to ensure that this once-in-a-generation funding reaches the communities it is intended to serve. I am concerned that if investment is not put into communities like East Oakland, my neighbors and family will continue not having access to internet and feel disconnected, similarly to how historical redlining in the same community made residents feel. During the pandemic, #OaklandUndivided was the only reason my siblings and I were able to log into school every day. I personally know lots of youth who still don't have access to internet. The State of California must act now to correct the maps to ensure 100% of Oakland public school students have access to a reliable internet connection and that isn't distributed to more

affluent communities with more access to these services. Another comment came from Haniel Kebede, Oakland Youth Commission. My name is Haniel Kebede and I am on the Youth Commission for the City of Oakland. I represent District 3. I am writing to ensure that this once-in-a-generation funding reaches the communities it is intended to serve. I am concerned about the fact that crucial funding for broadband infrastructure that will allow for faster and more stable internet is being allocated not to the underserved communities of Oakland, but to the more affluent cities of Pleasanton and Beverley Hills. We are in the so-called "digital age", but we as a state are not even able to provide stable and accessible internet access to the communities that lack it. Oakland youth deserve to have basic access to internet and online resources that would otherwise not be available to them if this funding isn't distributed in an equitable manner. The State of California must act now to prevent and reverse Oakland's ever-growing digital disparity. Last comment came in from Ana Xu Lu, resident of Oakland. My name is Ana Xu and I represent At-Large on the Oakland Youth Commission. I am writing to ensure that this once in a generation funding reaches the communities it is intended to serve. I am concerned that Oakland is being brushed to the side as the initial budget was reduced, leading to the broadband with three main branches being reduced to one and the area with the most need: East Oakland is slowly being forgotten. The inaccurate state broadband maps are also furthering the problem as East Oakland, the area with the most need is being represented as doing fine when internet access is often more expensive in the area while the speed is one of the lowest, going below the slowest plan you can purchase. The maps need to be corrected as soon as possible and be placed as a priority rather than being slowly evolved. While I don't live in East Oakland, I live in International close to Fruitvale and when my family just moved to Oakland we had to wait for various months since there was not the proper infrastructure, so I had to rely on my school and the library to complete schoolwork. This was also before the pandemic, now we are in an age where the internet is indispensable for students' education. This is one of the few chances we might have to closing the digital divide. Madam Chair, that ends our public comment session.

Thank you, Ms. Nguyen, and thank you to the public for your very inspiring and very heartfelt a comments. I would like to open it up to the members to see if there's any questions or comments? I see none in the room. Is there anyone online? Okay, none online. I would also take a moment of privilege to recognize someone that has been a part of this committee for four and a half years and has decided to go and go on to another chapter in her life. Ms. Lori Pepper is a Deputy Secretary at the California State Transportation Agency. She has been a pillar at the California Broadband Council and everything that we have done,

not only to develop the action plan, but also during the pandemic which really put and stressed our objectives to the fullest degree. But I would say, California stepped up and did an amazing job. You are a steadfast champion for broadband, and it sounds like in your new role, you will continue to be a champion to address the unserved and underserved in another State, but we would love to have kept you in California. But I do realize that, you know, you have personal decisions that you have to make to support your family. I would just again want to thank we would, you know, when it comes to the Digital Equity Plan, when it comes to the Affordable Connectivity Program, all the things that are important, you know, we are a collective body. Yes, individually, we have responsibilities but we don't get to do this unless we're all locked on arm and arm, as you can definitely see as of today's meeting. And so I just want to thank you for your service. Want to wish you the best of luck. Please keep us posted. We're always learning from other states so as you're making progress there, we want to make sure we share our stories and we stay connected. So with that, I'd like to allow you if you want to have a few words, or if any members have a few words for you, Ms. Pepper, thank you.

Yeah, thank you so much. Yeah, it's definitely a bittersweet decision to go home across the country to be near closer to family, but definitely leaving not just kind of this issue, but all the other issues I work on is, definitely a sad point. But, as you pointed out, I mean, there's just been so much that we have been able to do just in the past four and a half years that I've been here working with our former BTH secretary, who is still a friend of CalSTA and all of our departments. Of course, we're able to create a brand new position at Caltrans that really has kind of unclogged our permitting process there to just the Executive Order, the Broadband for All Executive Order, and that started before the pandemic, and continued during, and then in four months, creating the Broadband for All Action Plan and then, of course, implementing and executing, and it's just it's been kind of a whirlwind of activity. And I think, one of the, I guess silver linings if you want to call it, of the pandemic is the fact that the world really saw how important and critical it is to be connected, and how important it is that we not just provide services but that we ensure that people are able to take advantage of those services as well. And so the work that this Council does is so critical, and I will certainly miss working with all of you. But I will definitely be cheering you all on from afar so thank you so much.

Thank you. Ms. Pepper. Are there any comments from any of the members? Ms. McPeak.

Thank you, Madam Chair. I am really very sad to see Deputy Secretary Pepper leave California as you said. I think it's a very courageous decision to prioritize

family, and of course, you know, you will succeed professionally wherever you decide where you are going and whatever you decide to do. I do remember your first meeting here, because we just sat down, and then you spoke up at a meeting, and of course I spoke up because I was called upon by then the Chair Tong and she would. Amy would have been disappointed as you early, and if I didn't, you know, speak up at times, but you and we connected. And you understood the relationship of broadband as a strategy for mobility, a strategy for green technology. And I really appreciated that. But then you got assigned to have to manage me being really ticked off because we weren't making enough progress in a meeting of the minds to accelerate deployment and I acknowledge that I was glad to know you weren't moving out of state to get away from me. I do appreciate that you always have included me in the in the family of Caltrans and the agency, and what you did to ensure that there is that Broadband Coordinator within Caltrans, and those regular meetings with ISPs has been so essential. Again, it's part of this theme you convene a meeting, you go and listen. You keep moving forward and thank you, Lori, for making all of that happen. And again, and then, being a party to these regular meetings with industry and there's just no substitute for that leadership. We will miss you dearly.

Thank you. Commissioner Houck.

I just also wanted to join in thanking you for all your contributions for letting me bounce some things off of you. It's been really helpful to talk with you, and you will be very much missed. So thank you and good luck on your next endeavor.

All right. Any. Okay. Oh, Deputy Director Adams, would you like to say a few words?

Thank you very much, Chair Bailey-Crimmins. So Assistant Secretary Pepper, just wanted to personally thank you for being, you know, such as that best champion for broadband on the Broadband Council and within the State. I think that from your position, both within CalSTA and on the board, you've really kept an equity lens for those most vulnerable, you know, probably, you know, gone further than you know, some might have expected. I really want to come in you for both. you know, working in or thinking and working outside of the box, not just on the things that are your charge, but on those things that you know are part of the broader mission. I think you know it was mentioned today. Your support and advocacy for you know, affordability and adoption. And you know you're really working with CDT and others to bring folks like DMV to the table as partners in the ACP promotion efforts are just you know, we're very thankful. And so just thank you for, you know, personally teaching me about a lot about how

the state bureaucracy works. You've been a mentor and a teacher, and I'm going to miss you personally.

You've touched a lot of lives so thank you very much for everything that you've done. I would like to go ahead and thank all the Council members today, the presenters, the attendees in the room. We had to have a little bit of a rain outside, so there was a little bit more traffic so it took a little longer, and obviously everyone that participated on Zoom. I also want to express my gratitude that we're all working towards a common mission. And as we mentioned, it takes all of us. So that is very important for us to always keep that at the forefront of our mind, that we are here for Broadband for All and that is, we all have different ways that we're achieving that. But again, we do this locking arm and arm. Thanks to the vote today from all the members. Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 23rd, 2024, from 9:30 to 11:30 and then we look forward to seeing you then. We're going to call the California Broadband Council meeting adjourned. Thank you.