California Broadband Council (CBC) Meeting

April 25, 2025

9:30 am – 11:30 am

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 Friday, April 25, 2025 at 9:30 am in Covered California's Tahoe Board Room at 1601 Exposition Blvd. in Sacramento. Members of the public, presenters, and ex-officio members had the option to join in person or via virtual conference.

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**	Designee	X	
Branch Manager Steve Yarbrough	**California Office of Emergency Services**	Designee	X	
Dr. Kristina Mattis	**California Department of Education**	Designee	*X*	
Chief Deputy Director Jason Kenney	**Department of General Services**	Designee	*Online,* X	
(Acting) Undersecretary Alicia Fowler	**California State Transportation Agency**	Designee	*Online,* 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 Josh Becker	**Senate Energy, Utilities, and Communications Committee**	Member		X
Assemblymember Mike Gipson	**Assemblymember Mike A. Gipson**	Member		X

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome

Chair Liana Bailey-Crimmins welcomed Council members and attendees and provided a brief overview of the California Broadband Council agenda.

No CBC members and presenters made additional comments.

Agenda Item 2 – Executive Report

Deputy Director Scott Adams provided a high-level recap of various Broadband for All programs and initiatives, including the State Digital Equity Plan (SDEP), State Digital Equity Capacity Grant (DECG), as well as Partner & Stakeholder Engagement.

No CBC members and presenters made additional comments.

Agenda Item 3 – Broadband for All Updates

Deputy Director Scott Adams reminded Council members and members of the public that Broadband for All is comprised of multiple programs, initiatives, and a multibillion-dollar effort in California to close the digital divide. While much of the past work was centered around planning, there has been a significant shift to

implementation across the board. 18 of the 24 Broadband Action Plan items are complete. Mr. Adams emphasized that the remaining action items are long-term in nature and continue to be monitored.

The following CBC members made additional comments:
- Liana Bailey-Crimmins
- Scott Adams

Agenda Item 3.1 – Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative

Program Director Robert Payne of the Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative (MMBI) began his presentation by providing a high-level project update. He then shared a revised Middle Mile Broadband Network Cost Distribution that consisted of the revised plan for the $3.873 billion budget and cost components. Mr. Payne then shared the FFA Grant Awardee Handoffs while highlighting the importance of the partnership between CDT's Middle Mile and CPUC's Last Mile programs for coordination on MMBI network and FFA grant applications. Mr. Payne reported construction progress, including 1,930 miles completed by the end of March out of the 3,781 miles that have gone to construction, as well as 4,373 miles in preconstruction. He next shared an Installation Map that showed where the 3,781 miles actively being installed on a map of California. Mr. Payne also provided an update on a signed partnership with the City of LA Bureau of Street Lighting for a 13-mile joint-build, as well as negotiating a joint-build and land leases for hubs with 5 tribal communities and the City of Fort Bragg. Next, Mr. Payne provided an Operations Look Ahead with a MMBI Development timeline from network design and beginning preconstruction in 2022 through completing installation in 2026 with a fully operational network. Mr. Payne also shared Milestone Events, including a May 2.28 mile joint-build with Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians and a June 23.8 mile joint-build with Vero Fiber. Mr. Payne concluded his presentation by sharing upcoming events for virtual stakeholder meetings.

The following CBC members and presenters made additional comments:
- Sunne McPeak
- Robert Payne

Agenda Item 3.2 – Last-Mile Programs

Commissioner Darcie Houck from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) provided an overview of the Last-Mile Broadband Programs and Investments, including the Federal Funding Account (FFA), Loan Loss Reserve Program, California Advanced Services Fund (CASF), as well as the Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program. She noted that the BEAD application window is now open. CPUC is accepting applications via the BEAD

application portal. In her FFA update, Commissioner Houck reported that Round 1 awarded $1.1B for 113 projects in 52 counties across California. Round 2 will be a limited opportunity for the 6 remaining counties who did not receive funding through Round 1. Next, Ms. Houck shared the public safety benefits as a result of the FFA investments and showed photos of case studies throughout the state. CPUC has cleared 61 projects to begin construction. In her BEAD update, Commissioner Houck reported the CPUC received a 90-day extension by the NTIA to deliver final BEAD proposals. The deadline was extended from October 2, 2025, to January 2, 2026 to allow states and territories time to implement anticipated program changes. She mentioned that the status of the BEAD program is somewhat in flux. Lastly, Commissioner Houck shared a table outlining the CASF funds allocated to date and that the tribal technical assistance, public housing, and infrastructure adoption programs are accepting applications on a rolling basis until the deadline in July.

The following CBC members and presenters made additional comments:
- Steve Yarbrough

Agenda Item 3.3 – Statewide Broadband Adoption

Ms. Sunne McPeak from the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) provided an update on statewide broadband adoption. She reported that out of the 5.8M Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) eligible households, covered populations are the hardest to reach. Ms. McPeak also discussed the unsustainable connectivity for covered households and the increasing challenge to reach the unconnected households.

The following CBC members and presenters made additional comments:
- Liana Bailey-Crimmins
- Sunne McPeak

Agenda Item 3.4 – State Digital Equity Plan & Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program Implementation

Deputy Director Scott Adams shared key milestones on the State Digital Equity Plan (SDEP) and Capacity Grant Program implementation, including the launch of the California Digital Equity Program (CalDEP) Request for Applications (RFA) period on March 26. He shared the focus of the DECG program as well as the Capacity Grant Program structure. Mr. Adams reported on CDT's stakeholder engagement efforts that took place since the last CBC meeting. Deputy Director Adams then presented on the California Digital Equity Program (CalDEP) background & principles, purpose & goals, allowable uses, and funding tracks. He provided information on the Partnership Coordination

Resource and next steps in the RFA process. The deadline to submit CalDEP application is May 30, 2025 at 11:59 pm PDT. Finally, Mr. Adams shared an updated timeline for the approximation of important milestones for the SDEP & DECG Program implementation.

The following CBC members and presenters made additional comments:
- Kristina Mattis
- Sunne McPeak
- Darcie Houck

Agenda Item 4 – Community Spotlight

Rebecca Kauma, Director of Digital Equity from the County of Los Angeles, presented on the Los Angeles County Wildfires Digital Equity Collaboration collective efforts. For the purpose of the presentation, Ms. Kauma focused on the Eaton wildfire that took place in January between the Altadena and Pasadena areas. Within that area, over 14,000 acres and about 9,400 structures were destroyed over 24 active days. Multisector partners such as nonprofit organizations, cities, and community-based organizations convened in mid-January to promote existing digital equity and non-digital equity resources and services to households impacted by the wildfires. Through the County of Los Angeles' Delete the Divide Initiative, about 800 laptops were distributed to serve the Altadena, East Los Angeles, and Pasadena areas. At the Multi-Sector Digital Inclusion Resources Distribution event, 400 mobile hotspots and 400 laptops were distributed in addition to digital literacy training and technical support at no cost. Ms. Kauma showcased photos from both events and highlighted many multisector partners. She concluded her presentation by sharing her contact information with members of the Council and the public.

The following members of the public made comments via Zoom:
- Steve Yarbrough
- Kristina Mattis
- Darcie Houck
- Sunne McPeak

Agenda Item 5 – 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:
- Glenda Humiston, Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of California
- Trish Kelly, Valley Vision

- Lloyd Levine, T-Mobile

The following members of the public made comments via Zoom:
- Dr. Larry Ozeran, Clinical Informatics
- Patrick Messac, #OaklandUndivided

No public comments were received prior to the meeting in the California Broadband Council Email Inbox.

The following CBC members and presenters made additional comments:
- Darcie Houck
- Sunne McPeak

Agenda Item 6 – Closing

Director Bailey-Crimmins thanked Council members, presenters, and attendees and noted the next meeting is Friday, July 25, 2025 at 9:30-11:30 am at CoveredCA and online. The meeting adjourned at 11:33 am.

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

Transcript

Morning and welcome everyone. Good morning and welcome everyone. I'd like to call the April 25th, 2025, California Broadband Council meeting to order. Today's meeting is the Council second meeting of 2025, and, as you know, the Broadband for All consists of several coordinated initiatives across the State which is looking at closing the digital divide and fostering digital equity across California. Many of these initiatives have transitioned from planning to implementation, but we want to make sure that you continue to hear all the great progress that we are making. We obviously will hear from some great presentations, and we will also hear from the members questions and members of the public. I always wanted to do a shout out and acknowledgement to Covered California, thank you. Everyone in the room back there, thank you for letting us use your boardroom and being supportive of the California Broadband Council. So, the first roll, first order of business is roll-call. So, Ms. Nguyen, if you go ahead and call roll.

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 CBC meetings. Council members, please announce your presence as your name is called.

State Chief Information Officer and Director Bailey-Crimmins?

Here.

Thank you. Commissioner Houck?

Here.

Thank you, Mr. Yarbrough?

Here.

Thank you. Dr. Mattis?

Here.

Under Secretary Fowler?

Here.

Thank you. Ms. McPeak?

Present.

Deputy Secretary Flores? Mr. Chishom?

Present.

Secretary Snider-Ashtari? Senator Becker? Assemblymember Gipson? Chief Deputy Director, Kenney? Madam Chair, we have quorum.

Thank you, Ms. Nguyen. All right. Let's go ahead and go to the agenda slide. Oh, housekeeping!

Sorry about that. Now for housekeeping items for council members and members of the public. This meeting is being recorded, we will post a recording of this meeting, the slides and transcripts to the Broadband for All portal. Attendees, please note there is time allocated at the end of the public meeting for public comments, either in person via Zoom Phone and read through of public comments sent via email submitted prior to the meetings. Presenters, please cue Ricki to advance your slides. Committee members, please use the raise hand feature on Zoom, or raise your hand in person to notify Director Bailey-Crimmins to call on you to speak. Side by side, speaker view, when PowerPoint is shared, is best for viewing experience. Gallery view and PowerPoints are not shared. Closed captioning is available and feel free to use

the reaction at the bottom of your toolbar to raise your hand or star 9 if called in by phone, Madam Chair, we can begin.

Thank you, Ms. Nguyen. All right. Now, the agenda slide. Okay. Well, we have a full agenda for you today, including Executive Report out from Mr. Scott Adams, who oversees the Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy. We also, for our Broadband for All have multiple sub agendas. We are going to hear more about the Middle Mile Initiative. CPUC's Last Mile, where we're connecting households and obviously doing a lot of progress on the grants. We also are wanting to hear about adoption, because it's important to have the infrastructure. But it's also important of how communities are adopting the efforts. We're going to hear more about the digital equity implementation. Obviously the State received a grant and so we have a Capacity Grant that we're going to be issuing here soon out to the communities. And so, you'll hear more about that. Also, starting to this session, we're going to have a community spotlight. We feel it's important that we talk about all the progress. But at the end of the day it really where it matters, is hearing from community leaders of what's happening. And there's been a lot in the LA Area, and we're very lucky to have Miss Kauma to be able to speak to us about what she has seen on the ground down in the Palisades and Altadena. So, we're very lucky to have her and talking about closing the digital divide. With that with, is there any council members that maybe would like to say a few words before we get started with the official agenda? I'll start first in the room. Then I'll go online. Is there any hands online? Okay, I see none. So, we're going to go ahead and do the Executive Report out by Mr. Scott Adams.

Thank you, Chair Director Bailey-Crimmins. Good morning, Council members and members of the public. It's a pleasure to give you just a brief Executive Report out on the work that the Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy has done in support of CDT's broadband responsibilities, and those that we work on with the Broadband Council. If you could advance the next slide, please. Thank you. I'm going to be real short and sweet here. We've done a significant amount of work since our last meeting, really looking towards implementing the State Digital Equity Plan, and all of the different pieces that are associated with that, we've spent a significant amount of time on CDT's behalf in the administration of the Federal State Digital Equity Capacity Grant that was received from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to help support implementation of the Digital Equity Plan and then consistent with the values that the Broadband Council has always had in CDT and OBDL and the focus on partner and stakeholder input that are embedded in both the Action Plan and the Digital Equity Plan. We've done significant partner and stakeholder

engagement. Much of this you'll hear about in greater detail later. But that's my quick report, and I hand it back to you, Director.

Thank you, Mr. Adams. Are there any questions or comments from the Executive Report? All right, I do not see any, so we're going to go ahead and go into the Broadband for All where we have updates across multiple presenters. The first is to talk about the Broadband for All and the Capacity Grant efforts that we're oh, actually, no, that's Broadband for All. So, what exactly is going on with Department of Technology. So, Deputy Director Adams, if you could, please give us another update.

Yeah, thank you, Director. I think the quick update from us on the Broadband for All is just, I think we always need to continue to remind members of the Council and the public that Broadband for All is comprised of a number of different programs and initiatives, and a multi-billion dollar effort here in the state to close the digital divide. And as the you know, the Chair and Director mentioned, over the years, there's been a significant amount of planning that's been put together to develop an action plan to, you know, put together the infrastructure investments and programs. And you know, do the work associated with adoption and developing a State Digital Equity Plan. This year is a significant shift, as we've gone kind of from planning to implementation across the board. What I can say is that on the much of the action plan, as we've reported in previous meetings is complete. 18 of 24 items are complete. We continue to monitor those action items that are long term in nature that require you know, that have a longer runway. There are those that we mark complete, that we continue to refresh and monitor and have embedded into the State Digital Equity Plan, those really focus on continue to bring in funding to the State to support the need for the efforts, multiple entities are responsible for that. The engagement piece, many folks, you know, members of the Council and others, are responsible for that work. The important broadband adoption work that you mentioned Chair, you know a number of Broadband Council members are focusing on that. We acknowledge that there's, you know, been a bit of a constraint with the absence of the Affordable Connectivity Program, but work continues to go in terms of coordinating the partnership around folks to see that not just the infrastructure set in place, but we overcome the barriers to adoption that are multiple across the board. So, I'll give a more detailed presentation at the end of this segment on the status of the Digital Equity Plan and the Capacity Grant in the CalDEP program, or the Digital Equity Program, which is our subgrant program. But I hand it back to you, Chair to the next presenter.

Thank you, Mr. Adams. Any questions from any of the members in the room online? I would like to ask a question, obviously 18 of them have been

completed. There's several that are, like you said long term any challenges that the Board should be aware of, or obstacles that we feel, that you feel like you would need more support from us, or anything that we could be doing as a membership to assist the State and yourself on completing? I know a lot of a lot of those initiatives are being ran by different departments, but just anything off the top of your head you think that you're seeing as a trend?

I think at present I would say no, but I'd like to circle back with Staff and come back. I wouldn't like you, said a lot of the long-term items in the action plan are associated with, maybe policy, and are dependent on legislative action and other types of action. So why don't I huddle with Staff and the responsible parties for those long-term options or those the long-term items and see if we can provide a presentation at the next council meeting.

Thank you.

Thank you.

All right. The next agenda item is from Program Director Robert Payne, who will be giving an update about the Middle Mile Broadband Initiative.

Thank you, Chair and members. I appreciate the opportunity to be able to present the good work that our partners and the team have been doing for the enablement of the vision for the Middle Mile for the State of California. If I could have the next slide, please. Thank you. On this slide you can see the topics that I'm going to be covering throughout the quick update in our efforts to continue to serve the underserved and unserved communities. I'm happy to say that throughout the end of March our partners have been able to move 3,557 miles into construction and we are expecting to go into construction for our first repeater hut next month, which is very exciting for the team, as we are aware. That's the facility that will house the electronics that will allow us to light the network to provide service to the communities. And we continue to closely work with the FFA grant awardees. We'll talk a little bit more about that in a second. As obviously it's important for us to align with them and make sure that we are able to meet them where they need us to meet them. And then I'm going to talk a little bit about the operations. We're already looking forward to the operations of the network while we're still constructing need to do multiple things at the same time. And the team has shown an ability to have great agility and working multiple paths at the same time to make sure that we're able to realize the vision. If I could have the next slide, please. Throughout the program, I'm sure you can appreciate the need to be able to adjust, to make sure that we're meeting the demands of the miles that need to be constructed while keeping it within budget. Right now you can see that 7,800 miles are through joint build

and lease partners which have become a vital tool in enabling us to be able to do this balance that now represents about 96% of the entire network, and has allowed us to ensure that we continue to work within the budget constraints that this program has. Next slide, please. I mentioned earlier the importance of the cooperation with the FFA grantees, but I would be remiss if I didn't talk about the partnership between CDT and CPUC. It's impossible for either of the 2 programs to be successful without the other. The Middle Mile is important. Last Mile is important. Together they are the solution. And so that working together has been vital, I'm happy to say that we've met with over 60 FFA Grant awardees and that we've been working with them on what we're referring to as solutioning programs. So not only where they're going to be connecting to us, but how they're going to be connecting, the types of services that they're looking for, whether that be dark fiber or lit services. And so, as we go through each of those, we're tracking that and making sure that we're keeping everybody involved. One of the things that the team has been asked repeatedly, is around what it's going to cost for the FFA grants to connect. I'm happy to say we've been able to share that information. Those are price caps, and I want to emphasize that they really are a cap. The pricing for the network will be decided once we have the operator on board again. When we look at the timeline, I'll talk a little bit more about that. But these are caps to ensure that pricing will not be greater than this, and so that there's certainty for them, as they're putting together the business plans that they know what the upper limit of what the cost to connect to the network would be next slide, please. So, we've got a lot of progress going on which is exciting. Right? You know, we talk about needing to do the miles into the ground. I'm happy to say that we've got fiber pulled in over 1,900 miles across the State, which is, which is fantastic. But the reason for this chart also is to talk a little bit about the complexity of a program of this size and magnitude, as you can see, we think a lot about the miles that are on the Caltrans right away, but we've got over 3,000 miles that are off Caltrans right away. So, a lot of work with local governments, local municipalities as well, that have been great supporters of the program. And so I'm happy to say that Caltrans has all of their 305 miles in construction now, so they're through all of their pre-construction, which is exciting, and all of our partners continue to move forward, working with Caltrans on the permitting, on the right of way, and with local partners off the right of way, as we're moving forward. May I have the next slide, please? This map shows the installation of the network, and its color coded to show what's been installed in installation and what we still have to do through pre-construction. And one of the things that's interesting is that we now are planning like I said, the first hut and lighting up the network. One of the things I'd like everybody to remember is while we've got

lines on here showing that we've got installation of fiber ready until that fiber is lit up, we're not able to provide service. So that's the next important step, and as I mentioned, we will be putting in our 1st hut next month if I could have the next slide, please. I mentioned partnerships, and it's not just commercial partnerships that have been making this program successful. We've got partnerships in government to government. One of our latest is with the Bureau of Streetlights in LA. This 13 miles stretches down the 110 corridor is a vital area for connectivity, and we're very happy to be partnering with them. I'm also very proud of what the team's been able to do with our partnerships with tribal communities. As you can see, we are in conversations with 5 different tribal communities, for 2 of them are for segments of the network, and we have 3 of those for hut installations on tribal lands. That's great for the program. It gives us a great place a secure place for our huts, but it also creates a unique opportunity for the tribes to be able to connect into the network and take advantage of the network right on their tribal lands. If I could have the next slide to talk about the operations, look ahead. I had mentioned that we're getting ready to start putting in huts and the electronics, which is important. But obviously, it's important for us to make sure that the network is sustainable as well. So, we're already working with our partner who is the current delivery third party Administrator GSN to do some early sales on the network of fiber that will create a cash reserve that will allow us to manage the costs as they initially start up on the program. And so, we've got that pre-marketing. We've got some dark fiber sales that we're trying to do as well as we're looking to onboard an operations TPA in third quarter of this year, looking to have operations, then start after they come on board. So, as I talked about before, the team's doing a lot of different things at the same time, and I think, making good progress against all of those challenges. The next slide is simply for you to understand some of the work that we're doing around transparency. As you know, a program of this size, there's a lot of data and trying to get that data out in a format that can be communicated and understood by the community is super important. I'm not going to talk through this slide, but it's available. We use it when we have various meetings as a lead behind. And it's available online also for people to be able to have a snapshot to see where we are on the program, in the various items that are being done, whether it be putting in fiber or lighting up the network. Next slide, please. It's important to celebrate successes as well in the network. I believe in success early success often, and one of the ways to celebrate success is to make sure that we have groundbreakings with some of our partners. I'd like to talk about the Chumash kickoff that's going to be happening in May. We talk about 2.28 miles. It sounds very, very small against an 8,000-mile network. But the impact to the community, I am assured, is enormous for this

community. This is what I'd like to refer to as kind of a near Middle Mile or near Last Mile. It's kind of that bridge between the Middle Mile and the Last Mile, so we will be building together along that segment. We will use that to continue our Middle Mile onward, and they'll be using it to provide local service connectivity out into not only the tribal community, but also the local residents in that area as well. And then with Vero, one of our commercial partners, we are looking to do a groundbreaking in June which is, which is exciting as well. My last slide is kind of an update on upcoming events. I talked about transparency and the need to communicate out information. One of the things that came out of one of the MMAC meetings was that in that meeting, while we could hear from the community. We couldn't have a dialogue with the community. And so, our team set up these virtual stakeholder meetings, and where we can have a dialogue back and forth. Not only can we hear, but we can also respond to items that are important to the community. We have questions that are submitted ahead of time, so we're addressing specific questions and can have a give and take. You can see where the timings for the next meetings coming up. These have been well received and just appreciate the community's involvement and feedback, to allow us to better align with what will hopefully be the complete enablement of the vision for the Middle Mile. With that Chair, I turn it back to you.

Thank you, Mr. Payne. Excellent update on the Middle Mile. Are there any questions from any board members. I see, Ms. McPeak.

I have a question, but I also have a comment first. I want to commend the work of the Middle Mile initiative with the Chumash. I spent a good deal of my life, 1966 to 70, on that reservation, and I think they are very well positioned to actually be a lead for partnership within the Santa Ynez Valley, which is hard to serve because the terrain but they've actually got an excellent enterprise operation that the tribe, you know, operates, owns, governs, and in 66, then Chairman Davis came to UC Santa Barbara, where I was a student, and they asked for help to get water on the reservation. There was no running water on the reservation. We got that. We helped them raise money. But that then happened, and the water led to a Bingo parlor that led to the Casino that led to having broadband, and then the need for much greater deployment. So, I'm just really very happy to see all this unfold, and I'm still alive to see it so in any event, that's my commendation, and I want to really see a partnership go forward with the Chumash in the lead. This but the question is on the huts. My recollection is, and I was actually trying to go back that, that about 90% were going to be constructed by Caltrans or AD, and the balance by the Golden State Network, so whatever that split was, but it was, it was like on that order. The

huts that are on the reservations that you referenced particularly up in the Northwest are those part of the GSN huts, or is Caltrans constructing those?

Thank you very much for the question. So, the hut design is consistent across all of the huts, so they're exactly the same model. And that design was put together for us by Caltrans. Since the majority of the huts will be on Caltrans. We wanted to keep consistency for operational maintenance for that standpoint, so those specific huts that are off Caltrans right away, they will be implemented through the design and permitting phase with GSN to your point, so those will be done by GSN. All of the other permitting and pre-construction work will be done by Caltrans that are on the Caltrans right away, and your recollection is very good. It's about a 90-10 split.

Okay, thanks. Thanks.

Thank you, Ms. McPeak. Any other questions from any members? All right. Thank you very much, Mr. Payne. The next agenda item is a Last Mile program updates from Commissioner Houck.

So good morning and thank you! And I also want to recognize our partnership with CDT. And all of the work that we've been able to do together. Just it's been a real pleasure working with the agency and just wanted to note that from the start today, I'm going to provide some updates on the Public Utilities Last Mile programs. I will give you advance warning, there's a lot to update on. So, if you could go to the next slide, please. There we go. Is this correct? Okay, so I am going to talk today about our Broadband Equity Access and Deployment or BEAD program. The California Advanced Services program, our Loan Loss Reserve and our Last Mile Federal funding account programs. So, part of our mission at the PUC is to deliver programs that fund the deployment of safe, reliable, and affordable broadband services across California, especially to communities that lack this essential service. The table here provides a snapshot update of the broadband related programs that we oversee, including our multi-year Last Mile SB 156 programs. So, as many of, you know, the BEAD program allocated 1.86 billion dollars of Federal funding from the Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act to California, and that's administered by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. I'm going to go into more depth about the program a little bit later. But I do want to mention that the BEAD application window is opened and we are accepting applications via our BEAD application portal, and is, this week, earlier this week NTIA issued a 90-day extension to all States and Territories in anticipation of Federal changes to the program, and I'll talk about what that means for our deadline and what those potential changes could look like a little bit later. Our Advanced Services Fund

provides funding for 6 grant programs in a broad range of areas. The CASF is one of the surcharges funded through the public purpose programs administered by the Commission. The 2025 application deadline for the infrastructure Grant, I want to note that that has been postponed from April 1st of this year to October 31st to allow applicants time to leverage Federal funding from both the BEAD program and our round 2 in the FFA program. And then I'll be talking about adoption, public housing, tribal technical assistance which all have rolling application cycles, and the next application cycle closes July 1st of 2025. Our Loan Loss Reserve program aims to enable tribes, local governments and nonprofits to finance broadband deployment with more favorable terms when they borrow money from bond markets and financial institutions. That's a 50 million dollars program and those funds have been allocated. The Federal Funding Account program aims to deploy wireline Last Mile broadband infrastructure in every county of the State, and on February 20th, 2025, The Commission completed the 1st round of awards awarding over 1 billion dollars in broadband grants for projects spanning 52 counties across California. An expedited second grant solicitation is now underway to meet California's goal to award projects in every county in the State. The Federal funding account round two is going to be a limited opportunity for the 6 remaining counties that did not receive funding through the first round. And the multi-year funding represents comprehensive on-time investments implementing the vision of Broadband for All, and I'm going to dive a little bit deeper into that in subsequent slides. So, if we could go to the next slide. So, our Last Mile Federal Funding Account, we have some really great updates to report in completion of round one. Round one awarded 113 projects in 52 counties. The total awarded projects provided 1.11 billion dollars for broadband deployment that will improve connectivity, for 2 million Californians and deploy approximately 7,000 miles of fiber infrastructure. 42 projects awards were made directly to public entities. This included 7 counties, 16 cities, 8 joint powers authorities, 11 rule cooperatives, and 9 tribes also received FFA awards in this first round. So that was quite a heavy lift. And I really do want to do a shout out to our staff for all of the work that it took to get there and thank all of the participants in the program. Round two, again, is going to be limited to submit. It's going to be a limited opportunity for submitting Last Mile Federal Funding Account applications in 6 counties that did not receive awards in round one, and those counties are listed on the slide, Calaveras, Contra Costa, Inyo, Monterey, Orange, and Trinity counties. And the Commission is currently accepting application materials for those counties, and the application window is between April 15th through April 29th at 4 pm. So that'll be closing soon. The 6 counties again are listed on the slide, and then an additional 550 million dollars is set to

be allocated to the Last Mile program in 2027 and 2028 through the state budget. So, if we could go to the next slide, please, let's see. So, I did want to take a moment to just talk about public safety benefits of the investments that we've seen. They're really immeasurable here. First, there's reliability. Fiber optics is the most reliable technology available in these projects. Again, as I mentioned, are going to be deploying 7,000 miles of fiber Federal Funding Account Last Mile. Broadband investments are part of the critical infrastructure for managing safety, including wildfire alerts and 911 first responders. 69 projects are located in tier 2 and tier 3 Fire threat districts, 20 awarded projects are 100% underground and other Federal Funding Account projects are going to be undergrounded where possible. And I will note in a different proceeding at the PUC, our Kohler proceeding. We recently held a workshop up at the Middletown Rancheria, and we had a panel where we talked to emergency responders, and just the importance of getting reliable communication services, and how these services are really going to help ensure that first responders are able to get where they need to go, especially in these high fire threat districts, is going to be really critical. So, I wanted to highlight that for everyone today and let's see if we could go to the next slide. So, this slide just provides some examples of the projects that we've engaged with, and we've got the Alpine County Golden State Connect Authority Award, which was made in August of 2024, and that's going to serve 718 unserved locations, including 83 multiple dwelling units. And this Last Mile project will provide up to 10 gigabits of symmetrical service, using an open access Last Mile model and multiple service providers will use this infrastructure and offer different service plans to the people who live there, and 100% of the infrastructure is undergrounded fiber and is located in a tier 2, a high fire threat area. The other project that's highlighted here is the complementary project to the one that Mr. Payne mentioned regarding a Last Mile project for the Santa Inez band of Chumash Indians, and this project is located in Santa Barbara County. It was awarded for the Chumash Fiber Network, serving 193 unserved locations, including 59 multiple dwelling units, and the service will provide up to 5 gigabits per second symmetrical service to consumers. And it's 100% of the project will benefit disadvantaged or environmental and social justice communities and serves locations on federally recognized tribal lands. The third project that's highlighted here was an award to Plenary Broadband Infrastructure. Crenshaw's application for the Destination Crenshaw, Digital Equity Zone project. And this project is going to offer service to an estimated population of 5,523 connections with up to 10 gigabits per second symmetrical service, and deploy approximately 143 miles of Last Mile fiber, 100% of which will be underground. The Los Angeles Bureau of Street Lighting is also currently building and planning for future building of conduit infrastructure throughout the

project area which plenary and Destination Crenshaw will leverage for a more efficient deployment of this fiber, and the city of Los Angeles will connect the project to the Middle Mile network with separate funding. So, these are all examples of just the historic work that's being done. And if you could go to the next slide. So, this is wanted to really highlight that many of these projects are shovel ready. We've got 61 projects that are already cleared by the CPUC to begin construction, having met their permit obligations. I'm not going to go into details on all of this, but I wanted to highlight the picture on the left is of equipment being installed in Nevada County. The picture in the center is of VARCOMM groundbreaking in Tulare County, and the picture on the right is of Plumas County, Plumas Sierra working on poles in Plumas County. So, we are moving. We are getting fiber in the ground. So, it's pretty amazing to see this this coming to fruition. If you could go to the next slide, please. So now I want to talk a little bit about our BEAD program. So here it's again worth noting that the State must deliver a final proposal to NTIA for approval. And again, just recently, we received an extension of 90 days which will bring our deadline for the application for that final proposal from October 2nd, 2025, to January 2nd of 2026. This final proposal is going to, will outline the proposed subgrantees, and the process used to arrive at the selection. So again, I mentioned the application window is opened, and once applicants are selected, that will be what is compiled into that final proposal that goes to NTIA. So, the waiver notice that NTAI published this week stated that the 90-day extension was provided to allow States and Territories time to implement anticipated program changes. These anticipated changes have not been announced yet. So, we should all just remember that the status of the BEAD program is still somewhat in flux. We were in a challenging situation where we're in the process of accepting applications for the current program on a very tight deadline, even with the 90-day extension. And we know that there will be changes to this program coming out that we will, we will have to adjust and address. So, I will probably have more specific information at our next meeting, so I'm probably not going to go into much more detail on this other than stay tuned, and we'll hear more on that at our next meeting. If you could go to the next slide. So again, this is just additional information on the BEAD program deadlines. The next slide, please. Okay, so our California Advanced Services Fund program, this slide is an update on funding that's been allocated to date. This program really continues to help bridge the digital divide in California. Again, as I mentioned the infrastructure account program, we've delayed applications to October 31st in order to ensure that we can take advantage of the other Federal funding that's available and make sure that these programs are complementary. And I also want to note that Maria Ellis is online. So, if there's specific questions about the program or any of

the funding Maria is available. And I think that is basically, I'm oh, one more slide. Go ahead. I think you're right. We've got our technical assistance program, public housing infrastructure, adoption programs and we are continuing to take applications on a rolling basis. And again, the next application is due in July. So also available for questions on any of those programs. And thank you, Mr. Adams.

Thank you. Commissioner Houck. Just amazing progress. Obviously, pictures speak a thousand words, but it's always great to see work happening in neighborhoods and just that far reaching across every county that you guys are doing just amazing, impactful work across addressing the digital divide. So, thank you. We couldn't do it without you,

And we couldn't do it without you, because that Middle Mile is critical, as was mentioned earlier, to making this all work.

Thanks, Commissioner Houck. All right. Any questions, comments from any members. All right, Mr. Yarbrough.

Yeah. I just wanted to make a comment both from the previous update and then this one as well. I'm very encouraged by the amount of resilience to the infrastructure that's being built in in terms of undergrounding this the equipment, and making sure that if there is an event, especially if we're in fire country, or something like that, it makes it a lot easier to recover if we spend that time making sure that we do have a resilient infrastructure. And so, from my perspective, I'm very encouraged by that, both a reliability and recovery standpoint.

Thank you, Mr. Yarbrough. When she brought that slide up, I was thinking, Cal OES and all the things that you guys been doing. So I, hats off that we need to make sure that that service is ready when all of us need it. Yes, yeah.

And we really appreciate the coordination. And we rely a lot on the information from your office and guidance on the work we're doing so. We really appreciate that.

Any other questions or comments from any members for Commissioner Houck or CPUC. I do want to acknowledge we do have a member that joined us. So, Deputy Director Kenney, from DGS. So, we will make sure that we recognize you as well. Thank you, Mr. Kenney. All right, I see none. So, we're going to go ahead to the next agenda item, which is Ms. Sunne McPeak, who's going to give an update on the statewide broadband adoption.

Thank you, Madam Chair, I'm going to share data that actually was presented at the California Public Utilities Commission annual workshop on the California Advanced Services Fund, which was earlier this month on April 9th and Commissioner how kicked that off! It was about 4-hour presentations ending with the California Department of Technology presenting the overview of, I think, the Capacity Grant. And so going to the next slide. This is to share with you what we're learning from a California Public Utilities Commission, CASF grant adoption call center. And that is just to review the data. We all are aware we had 5.8 million plus households that were eligible for the Affordable Connectivity Program. To be sure, California did a better job than any other State and enrolled more than a million more households than the next State. I mean huge with just this all out mobilization, led by this Council and the department where we all contributed. As we're looking at, how do we reach those who are the most digitally disadvantaged and going back into the data, it's really instructive to realize a few things. One is that 60% of those who are eligible for ACP were in that 150 to 200% Federal poverty level in the upper income brackets. ACP had up to 200% of the Federal poverty level as eligible. Of course there were also public assistance program eligibility, primarily for the Federal Government Medicaid, which is Medi-Cal in California and SNAP, which is CalFresh, the food stamps in California. Those continue to be the 2 biggest program link qualifications for both what was ACP and now back to affordable offers. The covered households, which is one of the 8 identified covered populations in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act for the Digital Equity Program, there are 10 for BEAD. The covered households are that 150% or below. And that's essentially two fifths or 40% of the population that was eligible for ACP, and that number of those households tends to be almost about the number of people we didn't reach, who are eligible for ACP. So, it's you can look at the data and say, it's the hardest to reach that we still have to reach, which is almost a circular argument and definition going to the next slide. What we have also from the 2023 Statewide Digital Equity survey. And remember, California did a more extensive survey than any other State. There has not been ever more people that have been surveyed. And this data is absolutely reliable within 3% less than 3% margin of error. You'll often see a lot of other data that comes from the census but is not a randomly digitized a sampling of all the population. However, what we know is we continue to make progress. And we do have 81% of all of the covered households online, which is an amazing number. When we started, it was less than 50%. I mean, I may, and when I said when we started, it was this conscious effort in California, going back with the Public Utilities Commission establishing the California Emerging Technology Fund, say, go close the digital divide. So then, in that 13% of the population is unconnected, totally

unconnected. That compares to 9% in the overall population. And we have 6% who are under connected have only a smartphone. So, if the person who has that smartphone leaves the household, there is not connectivity at home. So, the kids who may be at home because a parent or guardian went to work now can't get on the Internet to do their homework. That's the practical implication of all that. That 6% compares to 3% in the overall population. So, you can see there's still this discrepancy, this divide that translates into a very manageable number when we're trying to figure out. How do we work together? And Madam Chair, you asked Deputy Director Adams, what more help? And he's and we need to be thoughtful about this, because the question that I lie awake thinking about at night is. how do we get to 500,000 people? We know that that's essentially the number, and they are the ones who are the most economically fragile. They often have temporary phone numbers and are changing that. We've seen this for 4 different follow-ups of statewide surveys people who said, we want you to call us because we want that $25, you're going to give us, or when we start out 10 to do the follow up survey, and we can only reach about a 3rd of them. And that's because there is a whole lot of people changing phones, changing addresses. When I say, economically fragile, they are often not able to have stable housing. Okay, going to the next slide. Here's now more information that really has come forward as we continue to implement the PUC grant and then going back to the data. It's actually interesting to see that the non covered or the non-connected households are paying a lot more than what the Federal Communications Commission says they should. The FCC says their yardstick is 2% of disposable income. 70% of the low-income households that are online are paying more. They're paying in excess of up to almost 3% of their disposable income, the average for the rest of us. And I want to tell you I pay a lot more in Internet connection subscriptions and telephone fees every month than I can shake a stick at. And we're only paying 1.4% on average here. So, it's the affordability issue that keeps just, you know, coming through in all of this. And so, we've got now the 70% of the low-income households are what we call unsustainably connected. We had to come up with a term to reference them. Going to the next slide in the challenge to reach everybody, because we, the California Emerging Technology Fund, are identified in the Governor's Broadband for All Executive Order. And then I sort of live with Action number 16. That is, in the action plan with the Department of Education, with the State Library, Mr. Chisholm, with the PUC to try to reach all households and get them online. During ACP and albeit there was, you know, one place to go to register that was actually very easy. If you had your proof of eligibility for Medi-Cal or CalFresh it would take 5 mins and 80% plus could enroll themselves. They would literally just press that button, and they had their

documents, and they would get their enrollment number, and they take that enrollment number and then would go select an Internet Service Provider. That is how ACP work through the FCC. Today there is no place to go. You can go to a website that the Department has. You can come to our Internet for all, now, website I, and I'm surprised by how many people go to our website and still call the call center. I can't figure out on our website exactly where I live, how many of the affordable offers I'm eligible for because you have to match up providers, multiple proprietors in many cases in your own area. Having said that, here's what's so sobering, it used to be, we would have to do, which is the most effective outreach is called direct notification, the Department of Health Care Services, the Department of Social Services. We now have 25 counties that are in process of doing direct notification to reinforce what the two State departments do. They send out to people on Medi-Cal and CalFresh, saying, you're eligible for a more affordable Internet subscription. With ACP, we had to do a hundred direct notifications to get one enrollment. Now with the process, because it's so much harder to reach people, they are the most digitally disadvantaged and economically fragile, it's a thousand to one. That's 10 times harder, and it's increasingly harder the more success we have. And that means it's the repetition. going back and back and back and back and notifying both State departments are on their 3rd round of notifying everybody. It makes a huge amount of difference. I will also tell you, because we have more than a hundred different distinct assigned phone numbers for the call center that we operate, that is largely supported for CBOs, who answer in language and culture largely supported by the PUC grant through the California Advanced Services Fund, that we, we are getting calls from distribution of information that happened more than a year ago. I do not know who sits around and keeps a postcard for a year, and on one morning decides, oh, I guess I'm going to read this mail and call, but that is what goes on, because they're using a number that was on a postcard that was sent out over a year ago. So bottom line is, if we're going to get Number 16 on the action plan accomplished. we have to just let all of this absorb and try to look at how do we reach the 70% who are unsustainably connected and how do we get to the 500,000 households who are unconnected and under connected, that are the poorest below 150% of the Federal poverty level. I think that's it.

Was that a mic drop, Ms. McPeak? Thank you for the metrics, obviously, and all your hard work and your passion for what you're doing. Are you or is there also a suggestion as we're looking at the goals and obviously the terrain has changed as ACP, as we look at our action plan and how we move forward as a committee to continue making progress. We can't bury our heads in the sand. So maybe if it's not this meeting, but maybe we do need to think as we're setting

goals and actions for those outstanding long term. You know, how do we continue to make the right progress to address the Governor's executive order, and just, you know, making sure, as human beings, we are thinking of these 500,000 people that are, you said the most dire, and making sure that we are reaching everyone? So, I don't know if you want to discuss that at all here, or if you want to.

We want to do more brainstorming. I mean, we rack our brain every day and at this point, this year we have done a distribution to 13 million households on top of well, with a direct notification process, and again supported, supported by the California Public Utilities grant through CASF, which is this huge asset that California has no other state has, as a California Advanced Services Fund. No other State has all the universal service programs. I mean, seriously. It is such a such a wonderful place that we get to work from, because these assets, as I call them, are in place. What I do think is really important is to continue to raise the awareness of the nature of the challenge, so the community organizations and all of the tribes and all of the local governments are aware of what they can do, and they often don't know how easy it can be just to keep that information flowing. A good example being Monterey County is getting ready to do direct notification. In the meantime, they printed flyers that they've just had at desks. I don't mean, you know counters for public services, people coming in the door, and we've had in the last month 309 calls from the flyers that have been distributed. Now that's a drop in the bucket as to what we will get. Ultimately, when they do their direct notification, but it helps, we and we know where those calls are coming from. We can immediately say back to the people on the ground that are running that program in Monterey County look how successful you have been. I will also say although I wasn't asked during the workshop to report on our Digital Literacy Training grants, we have a really extensive network of CBOs who do the digital literacy training. We train them as Digital Navigators. We get all the data back; they have to give us the assessment of how did people do before and after the 3 courses they take for basic literacy. And the data is just overwhelmingly clear that technology is more transformative for low-income households than for the rest of us who have multiple devices going at any given point in time. They will, their literacy doubles from, you know, from just doing the 8 hours that's the required number of hours through the through the CSF grant. And then, when they rate what difference it makes in their life, it is a greater difference they assess, than for those who were online, but didn't, didn't think they were digitally proficient enough. So, I'm just saying, it's also quite striking that if someone is totally unconnected, they get connected, and then they get the digital literacy training, it changes their lives according to them.

Thank you, Ms. McPeak. Is there any board members that have questions or comments? Look in the room online? Okay, thank you for your commitment to this very important effort Ms. McPeak. The last Broadband for All update, is from Deputy Director Adams, who's going to talk to us about the digital equity capacity grant. A lot of progress has been made by you and your team on this effort.

Thank you. Chair. Good to be back, pleasure to give an update on the status of both the implementation of the Digital Equity Plan and really, the work that we've done administering collectively on CDT's behalf, The State Digital Equity Capacity Grant, and the Subgrant Program. So could you advance the next slide, please, Ricki. I think what we wanted to do is recap on the on the Digital Equity Plan. I mean, we know this Council knows that the State has been committed to bridging the digital divide since the inception of this body in 2010. And we know the Governor's Executive Order really asked this body to refocus its efforts. It did. It created the Broadband for All Action Plan, which was in essence, the State's probably first Digital Equity Plan that was setting together the framework and the structure and the roadmap to get there. But still there were gaps, and there were things to evolve, and we were able to leverage the funding from the NTIA's Federal State Digital Equity Planning Grant in 2022, which kicked off a planning process that ensued between 2022 and 2023, where CDT and PUC, members of this council, and over 50,000 residents and stakeholders got together and developed the State Digital Equity Plan. In the second quarter of 2024 CDT submitted an application for its statutory allocation of Federal Digital Equity Capacity Grant dollars, which are, you know, really intended to help and support the State, to have capacity to implement the Digital Equity Plan. Between when we submitted the application and the beginning of this year, also ensued, like with the development of the Broadband Action Plan and the Digital Equity Plan, very extensive stakeholder engagement to help inform CDT on how to design the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant. But then further inform how we developed a Subgrant Program that's really intended to help many of the groups that we've heard about here do the work in their communities. And the good news is since our last meeting, we're very proud to announce that we've launched the Subgrant Program funded out of the Federal Capacity Grant. It's been named the California Digital Equity Program. That 50-million-dollar program was launched, the request for application period, launched in March 2026, and we're in an open solicitation period which will close on May 30th. Next slide, please. So, a lot of words on this slide, but I think it's important to remind the Council and the members of the public how the Digital Equity Plan was structured both by statute and with input from stakeholders and members of the public. And really, it's to focus on outcomes for the 8 covered

populations mentioned in statute. Those are the folks who are most impacted by the digital divide. The middle box, which are the 7 key activities. Those were activities that were really developed in concert with stakeholders that said these, you know, these are summary activities that would be required to get to digital equity. So, it's the infrastructure investments, the convening, the mapping, developing a sub grant program, digital inclusion practices, and you see, number 7, promoting low cost offers and subsidies. It's really a carryover from the action plan and action item number 16. And the end goal really is once we have a digitally equitable, you know state here that we're actually contributing to outcomes for covered populations that are enabled by digital equity. So, around education, health, digital literacy, etc. So that's what the funding in the grant is intended to fund, next slide please. Just real quick, we've shown this slide before but wanted to note that it's a 70 million dollars total grant to administer and help implement the plan. Given the need in the State of California, we developed a structure that would maximize funding to both help, you know, address the needs covered populations, help folks implement the activities and also be able to contribute to the outcomes. And so, what we have structured the program or with input from the public is that CDT would provide some centralized service like where there is a need for a digital literacy assessment and training platform or workforce development hub or say, centralized digital equity survey or mapping tool. There are some tools that stakeholders said during the planning process CDT could either procure, develop, or curate to support their work. The next bucket is to support State agency digital inclusion efforts. These are a bit harder, because, as you know, state agencies, you know what's attractive about this, they have the size and the scale to have impact to covered populations. But we're looking at some targeted you know, programs on state agency Digital Inclusion Programs that could have an impact on specific covered populations and particularly with specific outcomes. Hope to tell you more about that in later meetings throughout the year. But then the lion's share of the funding, 50 million of the 70-million-dollar grant is going to the California Digital Equity Program to support entities and coalitions around the State, do the work. Can we go to the next slide, please. Real quick here, obviously, stakeholder engagement is super important. So, we did want to underscore that we have endeavored to build on the planning process what we learned, and how we conducted our activities to be better, much like, Robert said on the MMBI. Stakeholders had talked about how can straining, how important these statutory bodies, like the Broadband Council in the Middle-Mile Advisory Committee are. But how sometimes they don't allow for like bidirectional conversation between stakeholders. So, we've conducted 9 monthly Stakeholder Briefings that are much longer, that allow for much more

back and forth between CDT and the stakeholders on program design. We've issued 2 program design questionnaires had 131 listening sessions and individual meetings. Attended 23 conferences and summits and then had a public comment process that got 66 public comments from many of the counties from across the State on our guidelines of our subgrant program. Next slide, please. What we wanted to share with this slide is again, as I mentioned, that the Digital Equity Capacity Grant is a statutory grant, and it is really intended to support implementation of the plan of the Digital Equity Plan. So really has to have close alignment with strategies, activities, measurable objectives and outcomes. At a high level what the Federal granting agency is expecting the state is that, like the Digital Equity Plan, we're focusing on covered populations that have measurable implementation strategies, long lasting and meaningful change and stakeholders are involved. We've heard about the Middle Mile. We know about the State's enormous infrastructure investments on the Middle Mile and the Last Mile. So, the CalDEP program is really intended to focus on goals 2 and 3, that this Council established in the action plan that were carried over into the Digital Equity Plan and policy outcomes. So, while goal 1 is to see that all residents have high performance, broadband at home schools, libraries, and businesses, that is really the focus of the Sb. 156 investments and further BEAD and the other suite of programs that the PUC administers through the California Advanced Service Fund. So, what the CalDEP program is really going to focus on is goals 2 and 3. So making sure that Californians have access to affordable devices and are affordable service and necessary devices and can access training and support to enable digital inclusion. Next slide, please. The purpose and the goals here, because I know that's really important to members of the Council and to the to the public is so through these sub-grants we are really intending to like, I said, fund entities to help support implementation of the plan to address digital equity barriers at a local regional and state level, develop ecosystems to increase capacity, not just to do the work, but to support them, to apply for other funds like through the California Advanced Service Adoption Account or identify private sector and philanthropic partners in their area that can help sustain their program, provide digital inclusion funding to trusted messengers and community groups, credible messengers in some census. And we've endeavored to allocate funding across every county and encourage statewide innovation. Next slide, please. A distinction for the CalDEP program and the Capacity Grant Program is we know that in those communities where infrastructure is a need, infrastructure is the sole focus. What this unique bucket of money is really intended to do is focus on the non-infrastructure deployment needs to get to the digital divide. So really help develop regional and local Digital Equity Plans as Ms. McPeak spoke about, implement Broadband

Adoption Campaigns which are to raise awareness of low cost offers, subsidies, do enrollment assistance, provide digital navigation services, digital literacy and skills training, targeted device distribution and support workforce development training and apprenticeships that are either focused on digital knowledge-based skill programs or maybe broadband and telecom specific work. Next slide, please. Briefly, at a high-level wanted to explain both or share with the Council and to any members of the public who are looking at submitting an application for the CalDEP program, how we've structured the 2 funding tracks in that program. Of the 50 million dollars, 43 million is really intended for regional and local ecosystem development. And so, there's a combo kind of planning plus capacity grant. So the first focus is to enable folks to either develop or refine their regional and local Digital Equity Plan to include the non-deployment activities and to really identify where their covered populations are, and then to provide flexibility to take the balance of their funding and implement digital equity activities by doing second-tier subgrants to trusted messengers in their community. So, we're allowing or heeding what we heard during the planning process and allowing this grant program to let those folks at the county and regional level subgrant out these funds to the trusted messengers who are most relevant to that region. So, it's like we're not going to pick the winners. We're allowing them to do that. There's going to be one application award per county. We are allowing multiple counties to go in together and kind of pool their resources, and I mentioned the subgrants. The second track of funding is smaller at 7 million. And again, when you look at that chart that we showed the outcomes that the State is going to be expected to drive around education and digital inclusion and essential services. We wanted to allocate a percentage of the funding that was focused exclusively on, how can we support our subgrantees to not just eliminate the barriers but achieve outcomes in those areas. And so, in this pool there'll be subgrants for specific focus on either the 6 outcome areas or specific innovations for covered populations. Looking at up to 14 grants in this pool. Going to award the highest scoring grant, and there is going to be an ability to do sub-granting. But there will be a requirement that the track 2 grantees who are developing these innovations submit a plan on how they're going to coordinate with the track one coalitions and applicants so that they're working together. Collaboration, alignment, efficiency, trying to eliminate duplication of efforts is what we heard in the planning process. And so that is what led to the structure of this program. Real quickly, next slide. Shifting focus from you know the Council and to those out there who may be thinking about submitting applications. Our team developed a technical assistance resource, knowing that there's a relatively unique structure to the way the CalDEP program is intended, to enable potential lead

applicants in a region or an area and on a funding track to declare their intent in this partnership coordination resource. And then it also allows those smaller regional community-based organizations or other entities that are looking to participate in development and plan and implementing that plan being potential subgrantees to seek and find each other, and before they submit an application so that they can develop a joint cohesive application moving forward. Next slide. I'm almost done here. And again, this slide is really focused on those seeking applications. If you are seeking to do that, wanted to let you know that the deadline is May 30th 11:59pm, pacific time and some key next steps we would recommend is, please go to the CalDEP pages on the Broadband for All Portal. There's a host of technical resource information that our very committed team has put together. We encourage you to read the grant guidelines and the request for application, and make sure that you really understand how this program was formulated, and how to develop partnerships. Enter your info into the partnership coordination portal. Our next office hours are going to be May 7th between 2 to 3pm. I believe the team is in the process of expanding those office hours by an hour, because there's a lot of interest here, and then you can always send any questions to our CalDEP email by May 9th 5 o'clock. There's a QR code here that can take you to where these resources can be found. Can you go to the next slide real quick? I always know the Chair is going to ask like, so what's the timeline here? And just wanted to kind of show you that the first row here, we're in between the horizontal green lines there. We're in the open application period, which will close in May. Application, review and selection process is going to occur in June and July. And actually, we have to make our selections and submit them to the NTIA by the end of August, in order to be compliant with our grant. And then sometime between September and December, the NTIA has to review our recommended selections before we can move forward and make the awards. So, I want to make sure that the Council knows that's the current timeline technical assistance is going to be ongoing throughout the process. We have an application portal that that folks hopefully have found and are having trouble with, are not having trouble with, and can our teams always at the ready to help and stakeholder engagement is going to be ongoing throughout. So that's my not so short update on the Digital Equity Plan. Just thank you very much, I'm happy to answer any questions.

Thank you, Mr. Adams, and also thank you for showing people where to get information on the website for collaboration and the QR code. That's always very, very helpful. I know you've been doing a lot of outreach, so excellent job. I'd like to open up for questions to any of the council members in the room. I see none. Oh, yes, I, Dr. Mattis.

Thank you so much, and I would like to acknowledge the incredible work that has taken place with the Broadband for All efforts. It is encouraging to see the through lines between our State Superintendents closing the digital divide initiative and especially aligned with goals 2 and 3, and ensuring the, as even Commissioner Houck and Ms. McPeak had said, we need the safe, reliable, and affordable connectivity for our students and our educators at our schools. And so, seeing all of that is truly incredible, because what we are seeing in the schools is that funding and that connectivity, the infrastructure is having that positive benefit for our students and their learning outcomes. And so, with that I would like to share and take this opportunity to share some of those benefits that we are seeing from our schools, because when we think about the devices and these grant opportunities that that schools receive, schools are actually able to have what they're coining as surplus rooms. That in the event of needing an additional device, they have that there ready to be deployed immediately that minimizes the disruption to instruction time. And so that is quite encouraging that schools have this opportunity now, and devices, meaning anything from laptops to projectors to even Wi-fi Hotspots if needed, so they have that there immediately. So, let's keep that going for our students and our educators. And then thinking about the digital literacy training and support, what we're seeing as one of the multitudes of best practices is that, that training and support for our students and teachers is taking place in context that is relevant learning. It's not done in isolation. Or as standalone, and so students and teachers actually see it applicable to real life lessons that then they can carry out beyond the classroom. So, when we think about digital safety, digital cyber safety, digital citizenship, when it comes to digital literacy, that's definitely critical. And really thinking about furthering our digital literacy efforts for our students and our educators, what's wonderful is that in addition to the digital literacy training that Ms. McPeak had mentioned, we are also engaging with the Council of Chief State School Officers, CCSSO and their Digital Excellence Grant that allows us to further our digital literacy training and supports through our California Educators Together platform that's open resource for educators to access. And so, we hope to advance those efforts as next steps. And what's even more encouraging through our digital literacy efforts, is seeing how we are able to quite soon launch, for instance, our AI task force, through which we had over 600 applicants of educators and administrators and industry partners interested to really advance, and further, how we inform AI in education, right? Because that is definitely here and now and in the future for our students. And even thinking about the efforts that we are making from technology aligned to what is needed for student mental health and well-being. And looking at the use of smartphones, we know that that is a hot topic, and even the what's happening

with social media and students and education and learning. And so, with all of this that's taking place, we are able to further advance our efforts and our collaboration. And so, I wanted to take that opportunity to thank you for all of that.

Dr. Mattis, thank you for reminding us that our youth are our future. And it is so wonderful to hear all the progress we know generative AI and all the technology, and as we're looking at literacy and addressing the digital divide, thank you for your and Department of Education's hard work in this effort and so fabulous, fabulous progress.

Yes, we definitely want to make sure that our students are set up to succeed and thrive. And it's through our collaborative efforts that we can make that happen. Thank you.

Thank you. I also see Ms. Sunny McPeak would like to make a comment.

Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to endorse the comments that Dr. Mattis has made, and to acknowledge the importance of being able to integrate the use of technology into teaching, learning and parent engagement. Which is my simple way of saying everything that Kristina went through. But Superintendent Thurman has been long a supporter, champion of the program. We've operated School to Home that has had more than 15 districts and 55 schools and 55,000 students and about 5,000 teachers trained, and it is just essential that you get to a critical mass where everybody has a device to take home. And there is this point in time where schools that did have support during the public health emergency, now don't have the same support. And so, there is really an additional challenge there, I want to share. But I will also just acknowledge how many unbelievably dedicated principals and teachers there are in our public schools, teaching in the schools that are in low-income communities who really want to make a difference. And ultimately, I want to just say, here's my again, farm girl attitude about this. If we ever really get the digital divide closed with the way we're going after it. You know that 500,000 households that we're trying to get online. Now, how do you keep it closed? It's through the schools. Its a school-based strategy that is ultimately going to be the way in which we permanently achieve on an ongoing basis, digital equity, because we all have to go to school, or we're supposed to. So anyway, that's just a comment about how this all fits together.

Thank you, Ms. McPeak, any other Commissioner Houck?

Just. I just wanted to join in those comments and thank everyone. And I think you know, we're seeing, as the infrastructure is getting in the ground, and

knowing that we have these equity issues that need to be addressed, how all of this fits together with safety, education, equity, and infrastructure. And we're making it happen. And so that's the positive part, even though we've still got a tremendous amount of work to do.

California leads the way. Thank you. So much. Do I have any questions or comments online or in the room? Okay, that concludes the Broadband for All. And now we get to go to the community highlight, and it is an absolute honor for the first, but not the last, community highlight to introduce Director of Digital Equity, Rebecca Kauma. And she's going to be giving us an update on the Los Angeles County wildfires and the digital equity collaboration that happened. With that I go ahead, I know she's online, Miss Kauma, if you go ahead and take it over.

Yes, thank you so much. Can everybody hear me? Okay?

Yes.

Awesome, thank you. I'm so happy to be here, and I'll go ahead and introduce myself again just out of formality. My name is Rebecca Kauma, and I'm actually the first ever Director of Digital Equity for the county of Los Angeles. And I've been in this role officially for a year and a half, and it has been truly a blessing to be able to work closely with so many of our regional partners and stakeholders within Los Angeles County. And before I get started, I just want to also start off by saying that I am here representing the county in our region. But I do also want to uplift all of our amazing partners and organizations that supported this effort. So, it was definitely a multi-sector collaboration. And I'm just here spreading the great work that we're doing here in Los Angeles County. If we can go ahead and go over to the next slide, please. Next slide. Thank you so much. So, as you guys already know, we did experience some devastating wildfires within our county, and this actually took place, as you already know, during the prime time of January, and it was definitely a lot for us to transition to and to be able to be responsive to as well. But I do want to take the time to acknowledge the wildfires that did take place, and for the purpose of my presentation, I'll be focusing on the Eaton wildfires which did take place within the Altadena and City of Pasadena areas. And I also just want to take the time to acknowledge and show respect for the lives that were lost by the significant wildfires within our region. But just for context here, just to have an understanding of how significant these wildfires were, especially the Eaton wildfire. We had about 14,000 acres burned within that area. They were about 9,400 structures destroyed, and this fire lasted for 24 active days. And just to also provide context on the Altadena area as well, because I think this is also very important to understand why we

needed to be responsive in that moment, and really uplifting digital equity and serving the communities that are most impacted. Altadena is considered to be an unincorporated area within Los Angeles County. And it also has a large Black/African American community. And that community was actually able to buy homes within this area and have a lot of community impact there as well. So, it was very important for us to truly understand the historic issues that were happening within the City of Pasadena, but also within unincorporated Altadena as well, next slide. Alright, so one thing that I also wanted to highlight as well is our collective effort. So right when the fires started taking place, and this is something that I learned being responsive to the COVID-19 pandemic and also having to address the digital divide within the City of Long Beach, is really making sure that we were being intentional with our convening. So I did want to take the time to highlight that the moment the wildfires started taking place, we wanted to ensure that we were being responsive to all of our community partners, and better understand how we can uplift and promote any existing digital equity, but also non-digital equity resources and services for households that were impacted by the wildfire. So, what we did in Los Angeles County in mid-January was convene multi-sector partners. And these multi-sector partners included cities, they included nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations....a lot of them you guys also know from the digital equity space and our large ecosystem here within the State...and we came together to discuss what our organizations are doing, and just to do a temperature check to see where the need is. And from those conversations we found out that a lot of our residents that were residing at the shelters did need equitable access to digital inclusion resources and services. And that many of our organizations already had the infrastructure set up to be able to support with that. So, for example, we had organizations that we're able to provide free subsidized internet, we had organizations that were able to provide computers, we had organizations that were also just able to provide other resources and support. So, we really wanted to be intentional with compiling all of those resources in one place. And providing a space for our stakeholders to have those organic conversations with each other and be like, how can we support? How can we help? And also, it was just great to see other partners as well, because obviously LA County is huge, and not every single aspect of our region was impacted by the wildfires. But just to have our other partners come and stand in solidarity with us as we were continuing to navigate that time, next slide please. So one thing that I also want to take that time to highlight before I talk about our collective effort that took place last month, is the work of the County of Los Angeles to Lead the Divide Initiative, and I absolutely love this particular initiative, and for context it is administered through the County of Los Angeles under the Internal

Services Department, and immediately the fire took place, started occurring within the county. Our Delete the Divide staff, immediately jumped to be able to support the community. And what makes this program so significant and so impactful is, first and foremost, we are hiring residents that come directly from the community to serve as interns, and they're also serving as navigators, and they are on the ground doing the work and making sure that our residents are most that are most in need get connected to resources and services. So, during that time, they were able to distribute almost 800 laptops. They were very responsive as well and making sure that they were connecting in a variety of different areas, which also included Altadena, East Los Angeles, and Pasadena. And they were also very intentional with their multi sector partnerships. One of the things that I really appreciated about believe the divide is that they always found a way to connect with where communities were already gathering. So, for example, they were very intentional with connecting with faith-based organizations so literally connecting where people are going to worship, and they're practicing their faith and connecting them to free digital inclusion, resources and services and really being responsive to the community. And I would say, that is the best way for us to continue to do digital equity work is by uplifting those that are from the community that have those trust and relationships and are able to connect directly with community members that are most impacted. Next slide. All right, now, I'm going to go ahead and highlight one of our exciting events that took place. So, as I already mentioned, LA County is extremely large, and we have a very strong and robust digital equity ecosystem with so many partners. And it was important for us to all come together and show support for the city of Pasadena, and also Altadena area as well. So last month on March 9th, which was a Sunday, at Jackie Robinson Community Center, we all came together and hosted a multi-sector, distribution, resources, event. And pretty much what that event did it allowed us to all come together and show support for those that were impacted by the Eaton wildfire. So again, that's the area that is surrounding Altadena, and which also had impact in the northern parts of the city of Pasadena, and make sure that they were connected to digital inclusion resources and services, and ultimately just showing our support. And I'll go ahead and ask them to turn to next slide, so we can show who was at the table as part of this event. And what makes this event so special is that we literally had multi-sector collaboration and engagement. So, as you can see, you see the City of Pasadena on there. You also see the county. You see our regional broadband consortia listed on there, but you also see nonprofit organizations and for-profit organizations that showed up. And we're there to help connect our residents to resources and services. And it wasn't just digital inclusion resources and services. It was other resources

as well, because we understand that it's important for us to align with other different types of activities when we're doing digital inclusion resources as well to ensure that our residents are getting connected to whatever they need in that given time. And so, everybody played a significant role. And I'll go ahead and turn to next slide to talk about what that day looked like in practice. And so, when residents arrived at this particular event, and to provide context, we had residents that literally arrived a couple of hours early to ensure that they can secure their spot for this event. So, the city of Pasadena put out a press release and that was able to pick up some media traction on popular local news stations such as KTLA. So, we actually had one resident that heard from her church that they were going to be providing resources and services at the Jackie Robinson Community Center within the City of Pasadena, and she literally left church, came down and sat down. She's like, I'm ready, I'm ready to get some free resources and services. And that was just the beautiful spirit that we had throughout that entire event, where everybody was just very excited. And so, what we were able to do during that time is first and foremost connect all of our residents that were participating to every single type of digital inclusion resource, and services that they needed. So, as you guys already know it's not just broadband that residents need. They also need the laptops, they need digital literacy, they need technical support. So, we had free mobile hotspots that were being distributed by T-Mobile. So that was part of our public private partnership. We had laptops that were also being distributed 400 by Human IT as well as Delete the Divide. And then we also had Everyone On, providing free digital literacy and technical support. And we actually had other organizations that were there that serve in a CIO capacity that were also there providing technical support. So, every resident was that was attending was able to connect to every single aspect and focus area within digital inclusion, which I feel like was very rewarding. And also, in addition to that, it also allowed us to better understand where those gaps are and where those needs are, so, we can continue to be responsive to addressing the digital divide even after we experience this horrific wildfire event, next slide. And I just want to take the time to also just show some photos here. You can see what our work looked like in action. You can see all of the community members that are receiving direct technical support from staff. You can also see our community members that are lining up to get resources and services. So, these are just some of the photos that highlight our great efforts and work that took place during that time. And one thing that I also want to mention as well is that we do have a very strong, robust digital equity ecosystem which I've already mentioned. So I do want to take the time to shout out all of our other conveners as well, such as LA Deal, Digital Equity LA, in addition to the county and all of our partners, because, again, it

takes all of us coming together and doing the work to ensure that we can have meaningful, equitable impact throughout the county. And I believe that is my last slide. I believe the next slide is my contact information. So, thank you so much for being here. I'm so happy to be able to share the great work that's happening within our region and our county. And I'm happy to answer any questions you guys may have, and my apologies. If I was going fast, I'm actually under the weather. I have a little one that brings every type of illness home from preschool. So, I'm trying to navigate that as I present with you guys today, so I appreciate your patience and grace.

Thank you so much, Rebecca Kauma. You just, as we talk about when we have, when we're in crisis, bringing people together to collaborate is not an option its essential. And what you just showed was, you know, people helping people on the ground during the LA wildfire, I know, shout out to Mr. Yarbrough and CalOES, and obviously the Governor. A lot of us have been lots of trips down there, but it is clear the community is so tight knit, and they trust each other more so than government. So, whatever we're doing to empower the CBOs, and you know, the directors of digital equity like yourselves. And the industry came together and nonprofits and local. Everyone is all in, not just during the emergency, but this is going to be an effort to from a recovery perspective. There are baseball fields and schools and parks that was a part of their community, and our job is to do whatever possible to bring that community, that sense of community back. But thank you so much for sharing your story, and sorry that you're under the weather but we could not tell. So, you did an excellent job.

Thank you so much.

Thank you so much. I'd love to open it up to any of the members. Mr. Yarbrough, I know that's near and dear to your heart. I think you've lived in the emergency center for probably since January.

Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, I did want to say, you know, thank you, Director Kauma, for your, for your leadership down there and for bringing this presentation to the Council. You know it's very important in when these incidents happen to have communication, capability, and you know, not just for the responders, but for the community itself. And you know, I'm reminded with these kinds of stories how, you know, equity, digital equity leads to digital literacy, which then leads to you being able to help your community. And so, it makes it all the more important what we're doing here to make sure that we have that equity, you know, in broad base. Because if you're not yourself a victim of the incident, then you can't be a responder to the incident, and that's what I hear

from this story. That you've, you know, just shared with us is that people did pull together and they became part of the response effort. And that really is encouraging. I think, you know, it's a way of indicating the payoff for the investment that we're all putting into this, you know, as citizens of California. And certainly, here in the technology spaces, we're building infrastructure and capability, we have to keep that in mind. You know I know, one of the things that Ms. McPeak is frequently known to mention is that you know, if somebody in the house just has a cell phone as their means of connecting that's, you know, great as far as it goes. But one of the first things that my office noticed during these fires is that all of the cell phone providers were the first, you know ones that we're seeing coming across the line. We have an outage here; we have an outage here. Verizon is out, T-Mobile is out at, AT&T is responding. So, they were responding to keep that infrastructure up and running. And if you are a household that only has cell phone access and an incident like this happens, then all of a sudden you go from having marginal access to no access whatsoever. And so, as we think about those things, you know, it kind of harkens back to the point I made earlier about the resilient nature of what we are building and making sure that to the extent we can, we're building a resilient infrastructure. Because, if nothing else, it makes it faster for us to recover from the incident, because we did devote that energy and resources to making sure that we underground lines, and, you know, get them below where the fire can get them. So, it sounds, you know, like your example from what you experienced is really touching on a lot of these points that you've heard us talk about today from all the presentations and comments. So, I think this is an excellent point for everybody to pay attention to. So, thank you again.

Thank you.

All right, Dr. Mattis

And I would like to congratulate the opening of Pally High. I believe that's referred to as the South Campus. And that was opened this week and brought back all the students from that particular school at a Sears building, I believe. And the amount of infrastructure that it took to rise up, raise up that building, the amount of miles and feet of cabling and wiring, and then you think about furniture and everything else that goes into rebuilding a school in a new building to bring back the students into that necessary learning environment is commendable. And so, thank you for your efforts in making that happen as well. Thank you.

Thank you, Dr. Mattis. Any other. Yes, Ms. Houck,

Just quickly. I just wanted to thank you for the presentation.

Thank you.

It's really inspiring to hear the work that that's happened. I concur with all of the comments from Mr. Yarborough, and just really appreciate you bringing this to us, so we can really hear firsthand what's happening on the ground, and how the work that that we're doing is impacting folks, and the importance of digital equity and building this infrastructure is so. Thank you very much.

Thank you.

Thank you, Commissioner.

One last shout out to Rebecca, thank you, Rebecca, for having organized he well this effort, but I was going back to the workshop for the BEAD Program and Digital Equity Program in May of 2023, and on which was a Saturday in Long Beach because you were at Long Beach before that, and she wasn't even there, she had to go to a family, think it was graduation. So, it was, but it happened very well, because you had organized it in advance. So, thank you.

Thank you so much.

As you can tell, you're a rock star to all of us, Ms. Kauma. So Kauma, so thank you so much for everything that you do on behalf of your residents. You inspire all of us to do better on behalf of the residents of California, so keep up the good work. And always keep us in mind if there's anything that this Council can do to support you and your local efforts. So, with that, thank you so much.

Thank you so much for having me. And I also just want to put a shout out there to the CDT team, they're amazing to work with as well. So, thank you very much for having me here today.

Thank you. All right, that concludes our formal presentation. I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to Ms. Nguyen to kick off public comment.

Thank you. 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 and two minutes per person. The order of public comments will be in person, comments, zoom and phone comments. And any emailed comments submitted prior to the meeting for in-person comments. Please form a line by the podium for zoom. Please use the raise hand feature in the lower toolbar or phone, please press Star 9 to raise your hand. Emailed comments were not received prior to the meeting, so I won't be reading any of those, so we will start with the first person in line at the podium.

I just want to acknowledge, and I'm sorry that I guess I must be blind, that the Honorable Lloyd Levine is in the audience, former member of the Assembly. I think you still represent T-Mobile and was a founding member of the California Emerging Technology Fund. Oh, my God, Lloyd, it's great to see you, but I apologize for just sitting here, not realizing that was you.

Good morning, Council. Thank you for the chance to come here and provide some remarks. I'm Glendy Humiston. I am the Vice President of Agriculture and Natural resources for the University of California System. In that role I also serve as the Director of Cooperative Extension and the Director of Agricultural Experiment Stations throughout the State, where we serve all 58 counties, and I'm here to offer a couple comments and one request about a constituency that does not get discussed here very often, if at all, and that is farm fields and working landscapes, who also need much better broadband connectivity, for a variety of reasons. We work with a great array of partners throughout the state to enhance our agricultural systems, agricultural productivity and part of that relies upon improving and expanding our agricultural technology. So, we're doing a great deal of work on developing new technology, including in California a specific initiative aimed at small and very small farmers, appropriate technology, partially because our farmers need it. But we also see that as a huge, potential economic driver. The world is full of small farmers, all of whom need that technology, we might develop and then be able to market. Towards that end we recently held a roundtable down at the World ag expo in Tulare, earlier this year, in February. Where we had secretary of CDFA, Karen Ross, several State Legislators and a wide array of key individuals speak about what some of the challenges and issues around Ag. Tech work. With that, we came up with a report that identifies those issues and also offers some recommendations. My request to you is that that report and a panel going into those details be on your next agenda so that you could really dig into them. And I will say, this is truly urgent. We've actually conducted studies on farm fields where there is literally no connectivity. Ag tech, robotics, drones are not going to be effective if we don't have that connectivity. So, thank you very much.

Good morning, Council members. Thank you for the opportunity to make a comment. And I am here as representing Valley Vision, we are a regional civic leadership organization. My name is Trish Kelly, I'm Managing Director. We also manage the CPUC funded connected area Broadband Consortium Valley Vision is also the convener for the California Jobs First Initiative. We manage the regional strategy for 8 counties here, and then finally, in partnership with Vice President Humiston and California Department of Food and Agriculture Valley Vision co-manages, a major initiative funded by USDA, called the Southwest

Regional Food Business Center. We provide capacity building and business support for smaller ranchers, farmers and food producers across the four States of the Southwest. So, I'm here today to follow up on what Glenda has mentioned to support the Council hearing the proceedings at the next meeting. We work very closely with our farming community here; we work with our Council of Governments. We've done sustainable AG land funding to see how we can keep agriculture viable. It's a huge economic driver in this region's the working lands and AG technologies are critical, foundational part of our economy. And we've been working in our rural communities since well, for the last 30 years, but through the Broadband Consortium for the last 12 years to try to get connectivity. So, it's an ongoing struggle. We're making progress. But we have all of the assets here. We have our Ag tech entrepreneurs. We have UC Davis, the number one Ag university in the country. We want to be able to use the technologies that they're developing that will help us meet our climate goals, our public safety goals and our competitiveness goals. We have many, many small farmers in this community, and we want to give them a level playing field. So, thank you for the opportunity.

Thank you. Thank you all very much for the opportunity to speak. It's great to see so many friendly faces, Madam Chair, Ms. McPeak, Commissioner Houck. Here, actually, at the invitation of Mr. Adams, our Head of Technology for the State of California, had a meeting with Scott earlier this week, and in that discussion they talked about some of T-Mobile's programs, and Scott said, well, why don't you come and talk to the council here this coming, what is it, Friday. So, I'm here to briefly talk about really two key things that I think the Council should know about as you consider these issues. I also want to just say it's great to hear all of this, as Sunny knows, I was a founding Board Member of CETF, and have been closely involved, actually, you and I founded this council back in 2010. So, it's kind of serendipitous, there as well with Senator Padilla. Exactly. It was his legislation correct? Yes. But I'm here really to talk about two things that really do tie well into this and I hope that my credibility comes not just as a representative of T-Mobile, and in case you couldn't tell, I wore the magenta shirt today. But my background, my long background with you, Sunne, and with the state. I'm here to talk about 5G as a technology and its role in closing the digital divide. And then T-Mobile social service programs. Historically, people have known T-Mobile as a phone company. We are decidedly not a phone company anymore. And I just want to touch briefly on those but would be happy to answer questions. Essentially, 5G is a transformational technology. And I have enjoyed watching the evolution, as we started back in 2005, 2006, we were very wireline focused because there were no alternate technologies. With the merger with Sprint, in 2020, T-Mobile is able to offer something that no other company can. Our

competitors do offer 5G, but because of strategic decisions, our 5G is far more advanced, and that is not just my opinion. What 5G does is it brings together the two best attributes of existing wireless technologies in this building. We've got a great, I assume, a great Wi-fi network. I wouldn't know, because my computer connects directly to T-Mobile's 5G network. So, I didn't need to connect to the Wi-fi. But we've got a great Wi-fi, high capacity, high speed, very low latency, and when you leave the building, no devices connect to this network. Alternately, you had the ability to go on a cellular network, and, as we could understand historically and I emphasize historically, cellular networks have been inferior. The benefit of a cellular network was it was everywhere. It was ubiquitous. T-Mobile's 5G Network is now ubiquitous broadband. It is broadband. Period. It is broadband untethered from a fixed location to that point. When I walk my dog in East Sacramento I can get 750 megabits per second on the phone. I'm a Senior Policy Fellow at UC Riverside School of Public Policy and Co-chair of the Advisory Board. I get routinely get 900 megabits to a gig on campus. And that's not just in major cities in California. The same story goes in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and Boise, Idaho. The other key benefit to our technology is, it's an alternate technology. It's an alternate delivery system.

Mr. Levine, I just want to make sure, public comment was limited, I just wanted to make sure that you were aware.

Speed through, then, if that's acceptable,

We do need to just be prepared...

Then to specifically address Mr. Adams points that network allows us to offer a variety of social service programs specifically to the to the meeting earlier this week. Project 10 million, which is a free service to K through 12 students throughout the United States. We give them Hotspots like this one. The advantage of this is that it can go anywhere. We know that it takes a village to raise a child, so if they're at grandma's house one day, at their aunt's house the next day, at their friend's house the next day, they've got this hotspot with them anywhere they want to go. In California, we are currently offering Project 10, not offering, we have Project 10 million deployed in 130 school districts with well over a hundred 1,000 students or families. Utilizing these Hotspots, we have several other programs as well in the interest of time. I will not belabor those. So, thank you very much for this, for the grace. Appreciate it.

Thank you. I do not see any more in person, and next we will hear public comments from Zoom via hands raised.

Dr. Larry Ozeran, please come off mute.

Can you hear me? Okay.

Yes, we can.

Well, thank you. Good morning, Council Members. Thank you for making time for public comment. I'm Dr. Larry Ozeran, a retired surgeon now focused on health technology. I view broadband fiber as critical infrastructure to health, especially in rural communities where health services can be limited, and long travel times are needed to get some types of care. Telehealth helps to fill the care gap that these underserved communities suffer relative to larger ones. I was very pleased to hear so much discussion about broadband equity and the digitally disadvantaged during this meeting. I'd like to emphasize the words of the Chair, that we can't bury our heads in the sand, we must make sure we are reaching everyone. Unfortunately, we, as a state, seem to be walking around the elephant in the room and not addressing the fact that first we must assure that broadband fiber reaches everyone, including farmers. As Glenda, Humiston, and Trish Kelly just mentioned. We have an unprecedented opportunity to enable every Californian to have access to fiber, broadband, and telehealth. Unfortunately, it appears the public funding is not quite enough to ensure we serve everyone in the California with fiber. The most rural communities with an existing health gap may see that health gap grow if they are left out of this opportunity. I do not see us connecting those communities anytime in the near future if we do not do so now, because these small constituencies are unlikely to persuade future money to be allocated for them. We can achieve Broadband for All. We simply need to find additional funds. If there are insufficient public funds, then we need private funds. There is huge value to ISPs to have access to Middle Mile infrastructure and Last Mile grants. Why are we not leveraging that value to require SPs to serve every community in the state. Consider that there are likely multi-billion-dollar opportunities in several large communities in the state like LA or San Francisco. What would it take to require ISPs wanting to service those communities using the Middle Mile infrastructure and Last Mile grants to serve several smaller communities in the Last Mile. We could follow models we've used in other contexts like medical coverage, to ensure that no one is left out. Statewide access to fiber is needed for the broadband equity that we claim we want. The negotiating strength we have as a State is lost if we leave each community to fend for themselves. Are we contractually requiring ISPs accessing the Middle Mile, and receiving Last Mile grants to serve several small, costly, and possibly unprofitable communities subsidized by their profits in large communities? If not, why not? I'm almost done.

Alright.

What approach will you support to ensure that we actually achieve Broadband for All? I encourage this council to work with the State Senate and Assembly leaders to resolve any barriers to having ISPs, reach every California community with broadband, fiber and make Broadband for All a reality. Thank you.

Thank you for your comment

Mr. Patrick Messac, please come off mute.

Okay. Good morning, Council members and State partners. My name is Patrick Messac, and I'm the Director of Oakland Undivided. First, a quick comment on CASF. One CASF account was not discussed today, the Regional Broadband Consortium account. It's such an important time for us to get organized. But there is at least one region in the State that doesn't currently have a Regional Broadband Consortium and other regions that are up for renewal this summer. Alarmingly, the State still hasn't announced the summer RBC application window. My ask here is simple. Please announce the June application deadline for the RBC Account as soon as possible. Now for my main comment. The CDT team has made commendable progress to achieve major installation milestones. I'd like to thank the team at CDT for their ongoing partnership in Oakland to actualize the transformative Middle Mile investment in our community. It means the world to us. Let's not forget, however, that the demand side of the network is equally, if not more important. If the communities that need it most cannot afford to access the network, then we're just talking about a bunch of buried glass. This body needs to answer a fundamental question about California's values. Is the purpose of the Middle Mile network to replicate the prohibitive cost of the private market and to generate windfall profits? Or will the network be priced to foster competition and enable FFA Last Mile projects? We appreciate that the MMBN needs to be self-sufficient. But we must be careful not to price out the very use cases this project was intended to serve. Many FFA projects are building infrastructure in communities that incumbent Internet service providers have overlooked for decades. In these areas the municipalities and community-oriented providers building out with FFA are relying on CDT to set affordable MMBN rates, so that they can deliver low or no cost service to Californians long after FFA Last Mile dollars are fully expended. I hope the council members will join the FFA recipients and your constituents in calling for CDT to price the backhaul affordably, especially in our highest poverty, least connected urban rural and tribal communities. Thank you for your time.

Council members. We do not see any more in person or online. Director Bailey Crimmins, that ends our public comment session.

Thank you, Miss Nguyen and thank you for all those in the public that gave comment today. I'd like to open it up to any members to see if there's any last comments. I see, Commissioner, Houck.

I just wanted to say that I am very interested in what we're doing with Broadband in the farming community. I've talked to, you know, been out for the VARCOMM Ribbon Cutting. And I know that's a farming community that was very concerned about broadband access. And I think it would be very helpful for the committee to hear if we're looking at the agenda for the next meeting.

We are, and I think we're all very proponents of farm tech that they run the California, and they run the nation, and we all need food. So, anything we could be doing to get out there to those very important individuals that can contribute to California's economy and to our ability to live as a society. So, let's go ahead and make that happen. So, I'm looking at my Deputy Director to add that to the agenda next time. Any other comments or questions from any of the members, Ms. McPeak.

I would love to know the doctor who talked about telehealth. I don't know who he is in your background, you are great. You're absolutely right. So, I don't know. I just want to see if we might connect. But thank you for testifying.

Thank you. Ms. McPeak will get you the information. And is there a way that we can maybe offline? Make sure that, you guys.

I just I wanted to acknowledge how much he was right on, definitely.

Alright. Thank you very much. I see no additional comments. So, I want to thank all the council members, the presenters and the public for your contribution today. Very thoughtful comments, a lot of insight also. Again, another shout out to our community highlight, you know our hearts and prayers go out to Angelinos and everything they've been through, and we are here to help them during the recovery phase. I also want to say that we are working closely together to take steps in laying the groundwork to achieve Broadband for All. Our next meeting is scheduled for Friday, July 25th, 2025, starting at 9:30am, at this wonderful and beautiful facility Covered California and online. We look forward to seeing everyone then. And with that, I call the April 25th, 2025, California Broadband Council adjourned. Thank you.