



Press Release

A publication of the Rural County Representatives of California

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 15, 2021

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RCRC Applauds State Passage of \$6 Billion Broadband Investment

SACRAMENTO, CA – Today the California State Legislature passed Senate Bill 156 establishing a historic \$6 billion investment in broadband infrastructure in the 2021-2022 California State Budget. The Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) partnered with a number of organizations in pursuing the passage of this bill in a collective effort to close the digital divide. RCRC specifically applauds the work of assembly members and senators representing rural areas of the state in championing this monumental effort.

“We are encouraged by the State’s recognition that reliable broadband infrastructure is as essential as electricity for families and businesses in our rural communities,” said Stacy Corless, RCRC Chair and Mono County Supervisor. “We appreciate this significant investment which will advance the provision of equitable, affordable access to high-speed internet for all Californians.”

The \$6 billion investment in Senate Bill 156 provides \$3.25 billion to construct a statewide open-access middle mile network and \$2 billion, including \$1 billion specifically for rural communities, for last-mile network construction. A statewide open-access middle-mile network is an essential first step towards increasing connectivity and affordability for all by making it easier for more internet providers to provide faster, cheaper service throughout the state. It will also create opportunities for more entities to build last-mile infrastructure in more places, improving service, speeds, and network resilience.

An additional \$750 million in the legislation will act as a loan loss reserve to leverage additional broadband infrastructure investments from local governments, tribal governments, and non-profits. The plan also includes reforms to the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) program to get the last-mile investments out more quickly and effectively.

The passage of this bill represents the largest investment in public broadband infrastructure in the country and will aid in connecting millions of Californians throughout the state to high-speed internet.

ABOUT RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES OF CALIFORNIA (RCRC)

The Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) is a thirty-seven member county strong service organization that champions policies on behalf of California's rural counties. RCRC is dedicated to representing the collective unique interests of its membership, providing legislative and regulatory representation at the State and Federal levels, and providing responsible services for its members to enhance and protect the quality of life in rural California counties. To learn more about RCRC, visit rcrcnet.org and follow @RuralCounties on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

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