



## AB 14 Bill Proposal – Internet For All Act of 2021

### SUMMARY

AB 14 prioritizes the deployment of broadband infrastructure in California's most vulnerable and unserved rural and urban communities by extending the ongoing collection of funds deposited into the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) to provide communities with grants necessary to bridge the digital divide.

### BACKGROUND

As evidenced by the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic, the capacity to rapidly connect all California residents with evolving emergency information is essential to safeguarding public health and safety during these unprecedented times. A Pew Research Study conducted in April 2020 found that roughly half of United States adults (53%) say the internet has been essential for them personally during the pandemic.

Although barriers to broadband connectivity have persisted for decades, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the digital divide that separates Californians without internet connectivity from those who already have and depend on fast and reliable internet access as a normal part of their daily lives. As record unemployment rates persist, internet access is vital for economic recovery and resiliency. This is especially important for our most vulnerable Californians who remain disproportionately disconnected, including those who are low-income, living in rural areas, and Black or Latino.

Further, lack of reliable access to academic resources and distance learning tools diminishes our youngest Californians' opportunity to thrive. This is a preventable barrier for far too many students, as nearly 1 million (15.6%) school-aged children (ages 6-17) have no internet connection at home and over 1.6 million (27.5%) of children do not have broadband access.

### THIS BILL

AB 14 recognizes that reliable internet connectivity is a critical necessity now, and that this will remain the case even after the COVID-19 pandemic has subsided. This bill equips Internet Service Providers, Local Governments, Electrical Cooperatives, and Tribal Governments with the opportunity to expedite the connection of their communities to reliable broadband access indefinitely. AB 14 ensures grants administered by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) from the CASF are awarded to applicants who are willing and able to quickly and efficiently connect households, community anchor institutions, small businesses, and employers.

Specifically, AB 14:

- Authorizes collection of the CASF surcharge at a \$150,000,000 per year cap.
- Creates a Broadband Bond Financing and Securitization Account to support costs related to financing the deployment of broadband infrastructure by a local government agency or nonprofit organization, including but not limited to, payments of costs of debt issuance, obtaining credit enhancement, and establishment and funding of reserves for the payment of principal and interest on debt.
- Requires CASF Infrastructure Grant applications must provide broadband access at speeds of a *minimum* of 100 megabits downstream and 20 megabits upstream.
- Identifies all households with speeds of at least 25 mbps downstream and 3 mbps upstream as 'unserved'.
  - Maintains prioritization of those 'unserved' households with speeds of at least 10 mbps downstream and 1 mbps upstream in addition to prioritization of high-poverty unserved households, meaning those within a census tract in which at least 50 percent of residents are designated low-income
- Ensures 'anchor institutions' defined as schools maintaining kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, community colleges, libraries, hospitals, health clinics, public safety entities, government buildings, and community organizations are eligible for CASF grants on a fair cost-sharing basis for interconnection along the path of deployment.
- Authorizes the CPUC to approve an application for funding to deploy or upgrade broadband services upon making a finding that the existing facility-based broadband provider is unwilling or unable to deploy broadband for the project application service area.
- Requires relevant state and local agencies and national organizations to develop recommendations and a model for streamlined local land use approval and construction permit processes for projects related



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to broadband infrastructure deployment and connectivity.

- Requires the California Department of Education to post information voluntarily reported by Local Education Agencies regarding the needs for computing devices and internet connectivity adequate for at-home learning on their website, in addition to an annual report of computing device and connectivity needs.
- Authorizes the CPUC to require each internet service provider to report information regarding each available free, low-cost, income-qualified, or affordable internet service plan advertised by the provider, including the cost of plan, eligibility requirements, data limitations, number of California residents enrolled in the plan, and a description of their outreach efforts to eligible populations.

AB 14 is a critical step towards expediting the deployment of broadband infrastructure throughout California. This bill provides a vital pathway to connect California's workforce to gainful employment, harness the life-saving technology of telemedicine, democratize distance learning, enable precision agriculture, and sustain economic transactions in times of emergencies.

#### **SUPPORT**

##### **3CORE**

Alameda Health Consortium  
American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA)  
American Academy of Pediatrics, California Chapter 2 (AAP-CA2)  
America's Physician Groups  
ARC  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles  
Association of California Healthcare Districts  
Association of California Healthcare Districts  
Association of California School Administrators  
BKY Consulting  
Broadband Consortium  
Burnish Creative  
Butte County Administration  
CA Forward  
CA Medicaid Health Plan  
California Academy of PAs  
California Alliance of Child and Family Services

California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CAMFT)  
California Association of Public Authorities for IHSS  
California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems  
California Children Trust  
California Children's Hospital  
California Chronic Care Coalition  
California Chronic Care Coalition San Diego County  
California Commission on Aging  
California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls  
California County Superintendents Educational Services Association  
California Dental Hygienists' Association  
California Department of Education  
California Department of Insurance  
California Health Collaborative  
California Health Information Association  
California Legislative Women's Caucus  
California Medical Association  
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network  
California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley  
California Senior Legislature  
California State Association of Counties  
Central Valley Community Foundation  
City Council Member Zach Hilton of City of Gilroy  
City of Alameda  
City of Brea  
City of Los Angeles  
City of Moorpark  
City of San Pablo  
City of Thousand Oaks  
City of Torrance  
City of Tustin  
City of Walnut Creek  
City of West Sacramento  
Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County (CCALAC)  
County of Contra Costa  
County of El Dorado  
County of Imperial  
County of Mariposa  
County of Monterey  
County of Napa  
County of San Diego  
County of San Luis Obispo  
County of Santa Clara  
County of Tulare



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County of Yuba  
Digital Equity Coalition  
Economic Development Collaborative  
Economic Vitality Corp.  
Eden Housing  
Fresno State Connective Initiative  
Generation Up  
Inland Empire Community Foundation  
League of California Cities  
Los Angeles Community College District  
Monterey County Board of Supervisors  
National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter  
North Bay Leadership Council  
North State Planning & Development Collective  
OCHIN  
Parent Institute for Quality Education  
Reach Central Coast  
Regional Economic Action Coalition (REACH)  
Rural Caucus, California Democratic Party  
San Joaquin Valley Rural Development Center  
Sierra Business Council  
Siskiyou Works  
South Bay Cities Council of Governments  
Southern California Association of Governments  
Stanislaus Community Foundation  
Supervisor Cindy Chavez, District 2, County of Santa Clara  
Tahoe Prosperity Center  
Teach Plus- California  
TechEquity Collaborative  
Tenet Healthcare Corporation  
The Fresno Center  
Triple P America (Positive Parent Program)  
Unite LA  
United Ways of California (UWCA)  
Valley Vision  
Western Center on Law & Poverty, Inc.  
Yolo Healthy Aging Alliance  
Yuba Community College District

#### CONTACT

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