

California seeks \$1 billion for broadband

Published: May 5, 2009 at 9:49 PM

California wants \$1 billion in federal stimulus money to bring high-speed Internet access to every household in the state, officials said.

The Sacramento Bee reported Tuesday that 45 percent of California residents lack broadband connections in their homes because of geography, disabilities, poor English language skills or poverty.

Proponents of the plan say the money will help close the digital divide in the nation's most populous state.

"The importance of closing that gap is almost incalculable," said Sunne Wright McPeak, president and chief executive officer of the California Emerging Technology Fund, a non-profit underwritten by four phone companies to oversee the effort to expand broadband use.

"Whether it's healthcare or education or a host of other aspects of life, broadband access is vital to virtually every person in California."

The federal stimulus money, contained in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, was approved by Congress in February.