



**For Immediate Release**

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## **California Emerging Technology Fund Applauds E-rate Reform *Next Step: Affordable Broadband Rate to Address "Wall of Poverty"***

**San Francisco and Los Angeles, CA – July 11, 2014** – The California Emerging Technology today applauded the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) vote to modernize the E-rate program, a critical step to meet California and National Broadband Plan goals to close the Digital Divide and academic Achievement Gap. “We support E-rate reform to drive increases in broadband adoption in low-income communities. Without this focus, too many American students face being left behind in low-performing schools. Reforms to the Universal Service Fund (USF) more generally, and E-rate specifically, are vital tools to close the Digital Divide,” CETF President and CEO Sunne Wright McPeak said. “We look forward to reviewing the revised E-rate regulations to ensure that they include provisions for transparency and goals and accountability for participants and service providers,” she added.

McPeak thanked each of the FCC Commissioners for taking time in the past few months to learn about the work of CETF and its school-based program, School2Home, which can be a model for the nation. Academic research and CETF experience with School2Home ([www.school2home.org](http://www.school2home.org)), a statewide technology program to turn around low-performing middle schools, find that engaged school leaders, well-trained teachers and parent participation are critical for better student achievement. E-rate reform will encourage schools to deploy wireless Internet connections necessary for teachers and students to use technology most effectively.

On Tuesday, CETF in partnership with The Field Poll released a statewide poll that found one in four California households does not have high-speed Internet at home. Home broadband adoption rates have stagnated over the past few years, leaving the hardest-to-reach Californians without an essential tool to access the educational, employment and civic engagement opportunities that lead to self-sufficiency. For full poll results, please visit <http://www.cetfund.org/progress/annualsurvey>

On the brighter side, the poll found that 6 in 10 of those who do not use the Internet at home suggested they might be interested if they had access to affordable broadband and equipment and the skills to use it. “E-rate is an essential catalyst, but it cannot do it all.” McPeak said. “The poll findings underscore that we have hit a wall of poverty. This should serve as a wake-up call to the FCC and elected leaders that the nation needs an affordable broadband rate and sustainable programs to address the literacy needs of low-income residents if we want our country to be competitive,” she said.

### **About the California Emerging Technology Fund**

*Our mission is to close the Digital Divide in California by breaking down barriers to high-speed Internet access at home. The goal is to reach 98% of all residences with broadband infrastructure and to achieve 80% home adoption by 2017. For more information, please visit [www.cetfund.org](http://www.cetfund.org).*

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