



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CETF, Partners Lay Out CA Priorities for New FCC Chairman

California Emerging Technology Fund and partners to speak at Oakland Town Hall with FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler; Will Call for National Broadband Adoption Goals, Expansion of E-Rate, and Integration of Broadband into Housing, Education, Workforce Training Programs

Oakland – January 9, 2013 – The California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) and its partners working to expand home broadband adoption among the state’s hardest-to-connect communities have been invited to lay out their priorities in a Town Hall with Federal Communications Commission Chairman Tom Wheeler.

Oakland Voices: A Town Hall on our Right to Communicate is being hosted by Voices for Internet Freedom, in partnership with the National Hispanic Media Coalition, Center for Media Justice, Free Press, and ColorOfChange. The event offers a unique opportunity for community members to speak with recently appointed Chairman Wheeler, and will be streamed live at <http://www.internetvoices.org>.

Oakland Voices: A Town Hall on Our Right to Communicate

Date: Thursday, January 9 **Time:** 7–9 p.m.

Location: Nile Hall, 1233 Preservation Park Way, Oakland, CA 94612

Highlights from CETF and partner presentations:

- **California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) Senior Vice President Susan Walters:** “One in three California households does not have broadband at home. Closing the Digital Divide with public policies and strategies to achieve the state goal of 80% broadband adoption at home is an imperative for economic prosperity, quality of life, and family self-sufficiency. Local, state, and federal agencies must work collaboratively to establish measurable goals and effectively leverage their resources. The FCC called for 90% adoption by 2020 in the National Broadband Plan. Now it is time to set national goals and performance metrics for broadband deployment, including capacity and speed, and for adoption along with a timetable and assigned responsibilities. Data and experience tell us that the majority of people without broadband at home do want to adopt the technology when they understand the value proposition. That experience also tells us that broadband has to be affordable and that sustainable adoption requires effective collaboration among providers, policy makers and local and regional community-based organizations, the ‘trusted messengers’ and “honest brokers”, to not only promote the benefits of being online but also provide critical digital literacy training.” www.cetfund.org

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- **National Hispanic Media Coalition (NHMC) Executive Vice President and General Counsel Jessica Gonzalez:** “Affordable, universal and open broadband internet access is integral to achieving equality in the U.S. This is particularly important for people of color, who have not only faced media misrepresentation and discrimination from economic opportunities, but also lag behind in broadband adoption. Today, NHMC calls on Chairman Wheeler to do everything in his power to ensure that all Americans have first-class access to all of the opportunities that broadband internet affords, said Jessica Gonzalez, General Counsel for NHMC. www.nhmc.org
- **California Foundation for Independent Living Centers (CFILC) Executive Director Teresa Favuzzi:** “Affordable access to broadband at home is crucial to closing the digital divide for people across all types of disabilities. For decades the disability community has fought for equal opportunities to education, employment, healthcare, housing and transportation. In the last decade, we have all experienced a social transformation that makes Internet essentially a new utility service. In order for the disability community to live, learn, earn and thrive, we must close the digital access gap. We can no longer expect to find a job, apply for college, monitor our child's report card, choose a doctor, find an apartment, or map a public transit route, without access to the Internet. With 60% of working aged people with disabilities unemployed or underemployed, access to affordable broadband is critical to leveling a playing field that is deeply out of balance. We ask the FCC to develop, prioritize and promote policies that expand access to affordable high-speed Internet, which allows Americans with disabilities to gain equal access to opportunities to live, learn, earn and thrive in this new digital revolution,” said Teresa Favuzzi, Executive Director of CFILC, which recently launched a new statewide partnership with CETF to work with more than 40 organizations to connect people with disabilities to affordable high-speed Internet at home. www.cfilc.org
- **Chicana/Latina Foundation (CLF) Executive Director Olga Talamante:** “The work to expand broadband at home takes our young Latina ambassadors from health fairs to union halls to church basements to farm fields. Too often, we find Latino school children having to go without Internet at home, requiring them to spend hours in the library or parking lot to get an Internet connection so they can do their homework. The FCC approved the merger of Comcast and NBC with a promise from Comcast that it would provide low-cost Internet service to families with students who could not otherwise afford it. I’m sorry to say the efforts by Comcast are falling very short. Its Internet Essentials program has enrolled less than 10% of eligible California families, yet Comcast is scheduled to end the \$10 a month offer in less than six months. We ask the FCC to step up and ensure Comcast and other Internet providers are not leaving the poorest Americans on the wrong side of the Digital Divide. We think Comcast in particular should not only be encouraged to continue its discount program beyond June 2014, but also expand it beyond students to include low-income seniors, people with disabilities and veterans,” said Olga Talamante, Executive Director of CLF, which has connected more than 1,000 low-income Latino families to broadband at home. www.chicanalatina.org
- **Mission Economic Development Agency (MEDA) Richard Abisla:** “We believe that broadband at home can most effectively be deployed as part of an overall neighborhood transformation strategy, as it empowers people to gain meaningful employment, develop financial literacy skills, and advance their education -- the building blocks for moving communities out of the poverty. Our ambitious goal is to

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ensure that every family who lives in or attends school in San Francisco's Mission District has access to a computer and Internet at home. We are partnering with the school district, city and the U. S. Department of Education through its Promise Neighborhood program. We urge the FCC to promote policies that encourage collaboration to leverage resources at all levels of government and support prioritized funding for neighborhood transformation initiatives that have established a coherent program with quantified goals and accountability to increase broadband adoption," said Richard Abisla, Technology Manager of MEDA, which has recently won a \$30 million, 5-year grant through the Promise Neighborhood partnership. www.medasf.org

- **Eden Housing President Linda Mandolini:** "Our residents live on very tight budgets, typically earning on average 35% of the area median income, with our seniors making substantially less. Their capacity to pay for Internet service is severely constrained. In an increasingly connected world, it has been an important part of Eden Housing's mission to help our residents narrow the digital divide. To reach our goals, it's imperative that the FCC ensure broadband remains affordable for those who can least pay for it," said Linda Mandolini, President of Eden Housing, a provider of affordable housing for nearly 15,000 Californians in 13 counties. www.edenhousing.org

About California Emerging Technology Fund

The mission of CETF is to close the Digital Divide in California by breaking down barriers to high-speed Internet access at home through its **Get Connected!** campaigns and public policies. The goal is to reach 98% of all residences with broadband infrastructure and to achieve 80% home adoption by 2017. This statewide goal can only be accomplished if the following specific hard-to-reach target communities achieve at least a 70% adoption rate: low-income populations, Latino households, rural communities, and people with disabilities. For more information, visit www.cetfund.org and www.getconnectedtoday.com.

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