

California Legislature

July 9, 2015

Chairman Tom Wheeler
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Ajit Pai
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel
Commissioner Michael O’Rielly
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Broadband Lifeline Rate

Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization, WC Docket No. 11-42
Telecommunications Carriers Eligible for Universal Service Support, WC Docket No. 09-197
Connect America Fund, WC Docket No. 10-90

Dear Chairman Wheeler, Commissioner Clyburn, Commissioner Pai, Commissioner Rosenworcel, and Commissioner O’Rielly:

As California Legislators, we are committed to closing the Digital Divide because it is one of the most powerful strategies to help the next generation succeed in a competitive global economy. Access to affordable high-speed Internet at home is a vital tool to achieve this goal. We commend the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for establishing a visionary path to empower all Americans with high-speed Internet access in the National Broadband Plan and we support your announcements to provide a widely-available affordable broadband rate for all low-income households through a Broadband Lifeline Program.

We know that you understand the importance of technology today to empower low-income residents in poor neighborhoods. More than 20% of all California households remain offline and in this Digital Age are being left behind at an accelerating pace—increasingly being disenfranchised from the democracy itself because so much government information and so many public services are online. According to the 2015 Annual Survey on broadband adoption in California (sponsored by the California Emerging Technology Fund and conducted by the Field Research Corporation), the Digital Divide persists for disadvantaged communities with large percentages of households not connected at home—35% of low-income households (under \$20,000 annual income); 30% of Latino families (37% for Spanish-speaking households); and 41% of people with disabilities. Yet,



participation in daily life requires broadband access at home—job and college applications, school homework, healthcare coverage, workforce training, and education scholarships.

We also know that it takes a “trusted messenger” to reach offline households. Research shows that there are 3 primary barriers to broadband adoption: (1) Cost; (2) Relevance; and (3) Digital Literacy. An effective Broadband Lifeline Program must provide dedicated funding for community-based organizations (CBOs), schools and libraries to assist providers with in-language and in-culture outreach, digital literacy training, and sign-ups for subscriptions to successfully close the Digital Divide. Further, there must be transparency and accountability to achieve tangible results.

Therefore, we respectfully urge you to design a successful Broadband Lifeline Program by taking the following actions:

- Establish an affordable high-speed Internet service plan for all low-income households offered by and through all broadband providers (in the \$10/month range) with sufficient speeds and a wireless modem for compatibility with school-issued devices. A Broadband Lifeline Program should augment Telephone Lifeline and not force consumers to choose between the two necessary technologies and programs.
- Capitalize an independent fund to support community-based organizations (CBOs), schools and libraries (as “trusted messengers”) through performance-based grants to assist in enrolling eligible low-income households and participate in true public-private partnerships.
- Appoint an oversight advisory body to ensure transparency and accountability with a broad base of stakeholders and community leaders knowledgeable about broadband adoption.

We embrace the goal in the National Broadband Plan “to create a high-performance America—a more productive, creative, efficient America in which affordable broadband is available everywhere and everyone has the means and skills to use valuable broadband applications.” You have the opportunity to significantly move towards achieving this goal by enacting a workable Broadband Lifeline Program. We urge your bold action and we welcome the opportunity to work together to get all Californians and all Americans online.

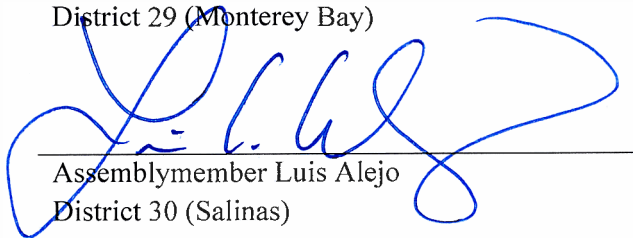
Sincerely,



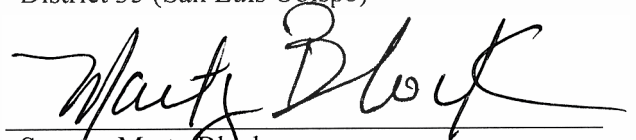
Assemblymember Mark Stone
District 29 (Monterey Bay)



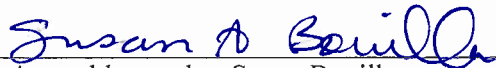
Assemblymember Katcho Achadjian
District 35 (San Luis Obispo)



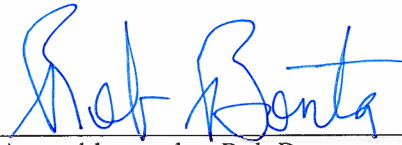
Assemblymember Luis Alejo
District 30 (Salinas)



Senator Marty Block
District 39 (San Diego)



Assemblymember Susan Bonilla
District 14 (Concord)



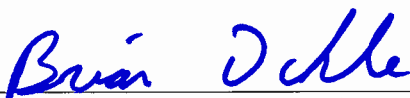
Assemblymember Rob Bonta
District 18 (Alameda)




Assemblymember Nora Campos
District 27 (San Jose)



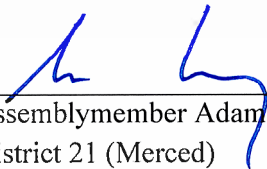
Senator Anthony Cannella
District 12 (Ceres)



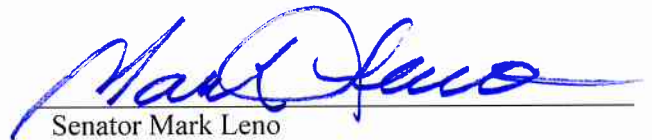
Assemblymember Brian Dahle
District 1 (Bieber)



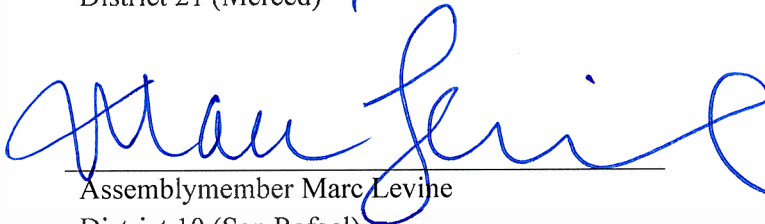
Assemblymember Susan Eggman
District 13 (Stockton)



Assemblymember Adam Gray
District 21 (Merced)



Senator Mark Leno
District 11 (San Francisco)



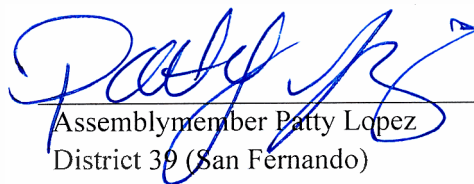
Assemblymember Marc Levine
District 10 (San Rafael)



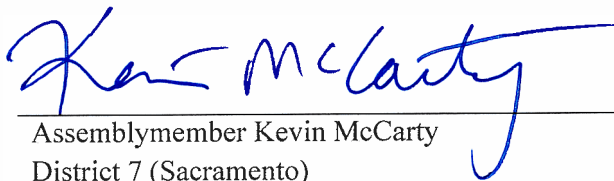
Senator Connie Leyva
District 20 (Chino)



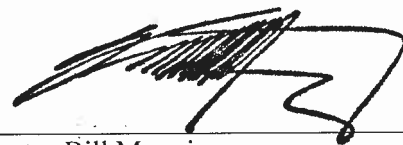
Senator Carol Liu
District 25 (La Canada Flintridge)



Assemblymember Patty Lopez
District 39 (San Fernando)



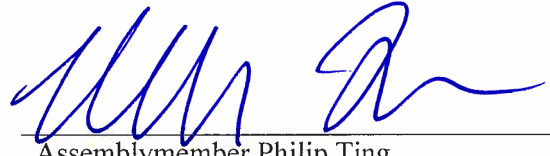
Assemblymember Kevin McCarty
District 7 (Sacramento)



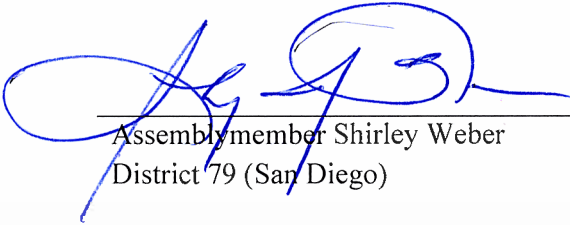
Senator Bill Monning
District 17 (Carmel)



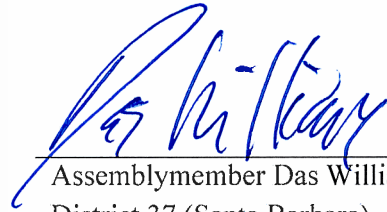
Assemblymember Kevin Mullin
District 22 (South San Francisco)



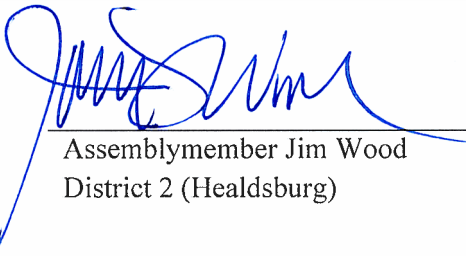
Assemblymember Philip Ting
District 19 (San Francisco)



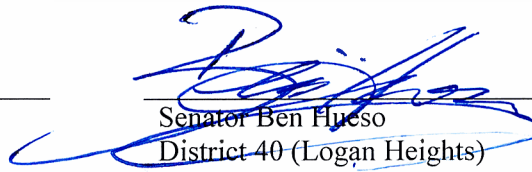
Assemblymember Shirley Weber
District 79 (San Diego)



Assemblymember Das Williams
District 37 (Santa Barbara)



Assemblymember Jim Wood
District 2 (Healdsburg)



Senator Ben Hueso
District 40 (Logan Heights)



Assembly Committee on Utilities and Commerce

Assemblymember Anthony Rendon, Chair

California Legislature

September 4, 2015

Chairman Tom Wheeler
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Ajit Pai
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel
Commissioner Michael O’Rielly
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington D.C. 20554

Re: Expanding Broadband Access

Dear Chairman Wheeler, Commissioners Clyburn, Pai, Rosenworcel, and O’Rielly:

As Chair of the California State Assembly Utilities and Commerce Committee, I understand that access to affordable high-speed Internet is a vital tool to ensure that individuals have the skills necessary to succeed in a competitive global economy. I commend the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for its commitment to ensure that low-income households have access to affordable broadband rates.

Access to broadband services is vital for navigating daily life. More than 20% of all California’s households still remain without adequate broadband access. Inadequate broadband services makes it more difficult for students to do their homework and for people to find jobs and get the necessary training and information to stay competitive in today’s workforce. Often times, the primary barriers to broadband adoption are (1) costs; (2) relevance, and (3) digital literacy. These barriers are persistent in many disadvantaged communities, such as those in the district I represent. My district is made up predominantly of moderate- and low-income Latino households, and whether or not these communities are reached will determine the success or failure of any program.

Hence, I urge the FCC, when designing a program to expand broadband access, to ensure that the program is designed in a way that provides equal access and funding for all communities in order to close the digital divide. In designing the program, I urge the FCC to establish affordable high



Letter to Federal Communications Commission
Re: Expanding Broadband Access

September 4, 2015

speed Internet for low-income households and other minority communities, and that these programs are transparent and are held accountable to the communities we represent. I look forward to working together to ensure that all Americans have access to affordable broadband services.

Sincerely,



ANTHONY RENDON
Assemblymember, 63rd District

AR/ec

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STANDING COMMITTEE
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CHAIR

SENATOR KEVIN DE LEÓN

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

June 2015

Chairman Tom Wheeler
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
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Re: Broadband Lifeline Rate

Dear Chairman Wheeler, Commissioner Clyburn, Commissioner Pai,
Commissioner Rosenworcel, and Commissioner O’Rielly:

As a California State Senator I am committed to helping the next generation succeed in a competitive global economy. Access to affordable high-speed Internet at home is a vital tool to achieve this goal. We commend the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for establishing a path that closes the Digital Divide and empowers all Americans with high-speed Internet access in the National Broadband Plan. Most importantly, I support your announcement to provide a widely-available affordable broadband rate for all low-income households through a Broadband Lifeline Program.

I appreciate your understanding of the importance of technology today and its ability to empower low-income residents in poor neighborhoods. More than 20% of all California households remain offline and in this Digital Age are being left behind at an accelerating pace—increasingly being disenfranchised from the democracy itself because so much government information and so many public services are online. According to the 2015 Annual Survey on broadband adoption in California (sponsored by the California Emerging Technology Fund and conducted by the Field Research Corporation), the Digital Divide persists for disadvantaged communities with large percentages of households not connected at home—35% of low-income households (under \$20,000 annual income); 30% of Latino families (37% for Spanish-speaking households); and 41% of people with disabilities. Yet, participation in daily life requires broadband access at

home—job and college applications, school homework, healthcare coverage, workforce training, and education scholarships.

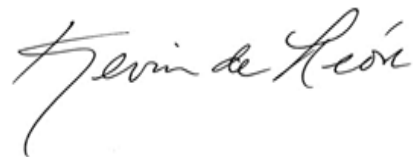
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KEVIN DE LEÓN
President pro Tempore
Twenty-Fourth Senate District