



CETF CEO Urges Business Leaders and ISPs to Seek Sincere Public-Private Partnerships to Close the Digital Divide in President Biden’s First Term

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Bay Area and Los Angeles, California – The [California Emerging Technology Fund](#) (CETF), the only statewide foundation focused solely on achieving Digital Equity for all Californians, is providing recommendations to elected officials, policymakers and business groups on crafting sustainable solutions to finally close the Digital Divide in America. CETF by state statute is a member of the California Broadband Council as the only statewide non-profit organization assigned the mission by the California Public Utilities Commission in 2005 to close the Digital Divide and is required by law to report annually to the Legislature. CETF fulfills its unique role and long-standing expertise in advancing public policy to accelerate broadband deployment and adoption by promoting [Internet For All Now](#).

Statement from CETF President and CEO Sunne Wright McPeak on national Call to Action to Close the Digital Divide:

“America can close the Digital Divide in the first term of the Biden Administration if the federal government encourages through strategic investments the Internet Service Providers to build infrastructure to the most remote rural communities, including Tribal Lands, and improve woefully-inadequate networks in high-poverty underserved urban neighborhoods while offering quality affordable offers to low-income residents and doing so in partnership with states and community-based organizations that can do the outreach in-language and in-culture as the trusted messengers. It is essential that business leaders and major employers support cost-effective solutions and sincere public-private partnerships that require ISPs to ‘step up or step aside’ instead of seeking federal government subsidies for corporate welfare.”

CETF recommends the U.S. Council on Competitiveness Report, [Competing in the Next Economy](#), which calls for authorizing a federal investment on the order of \$100 billion for both broadband deployment and adoption, including digital skills development. (See page 60 of report.)

CETF commends The Business Roundtable for recognizing the immediate imperative to close the Digital Divide, which has been exposed by the pandemic as a Digital Cliff, with families falling off into deeper poverty and greater isolation. Immediate investment by the federal government in partnership with states not only will address the digital disparities which are rooted in systemic racism, but fortunately also will provide a big stimulus to jumpstart economic recovery and will result in significant increases to GDP and relative global economic productivity.

However, the federal government should focus on investing its limited resources to support sustainable solutions. We urge The Business Roundtable to go further in its call to action to seek “sincere public-private partnerships” instead of huge subsidies to ISPs, which the current debate is dangerously titling towards justifying.

CETF welcomes opportunities to work with the Council on Competitiveness, Business Roundtable, President Biden’s Administration and Congress to implement sustainable solutions to achieve Digital Equity – a 21st CENTURY CIVIL RIGHT.”

Additional Background

CETF recommendations, many of which are included in the [Digital Equity Bill of Rights](#), are based on best practices developed over 15 years of collaborating with top national and state leaders in government coupled with on-the-ground partnerships with regional, local and school leaders, civic organizations, business leaders, and several hundred community-based organizations in the quest for Digital Equity to achieve [Internet For All Now](#).

CETF policy recommendations are included in the [California Broadband for All Action Plan](#) (the result of an Executive Order by Governor Gavin Newsom to expand high-speed Internet deployment and adoption) and the Council on Competitiveness [Competing in the Next Economy](#) report (Broadband section pages 58-61), which includes the recommendation by CETF to authorize a federal investment of \$100 billion for broadband deployment and adoption, including digital skills development, and incorporate Digital Inclusion into all federal programs and services. The Business Roundtable plan is for [Bridging the Digital Divide](#).

Additional Resources

[California Emerging Technology Fund Overview for Council on Competitiveness](#)
[California Emerging Technology Fund Comments to the FCC: In the Matter of Emergency Broadband Connectivity Fund Assistance WC Docket No. 20-445](#)

[About California Emerging Technology Fund](#)

The mission of CETF is to close the Digital Divide in California while advancing Digital Equity in the state and informing national policy. The state goal for broadband infrastructure is to reach at least 98% of California residences in every region and to achieve 90% home broadband adoption by 2022. Still, one in five Californians does not have adequate high-speed connections to the Internet, limiting access to distance learning, employment, telehealth, civic engagement, and more. CETF strives to build capacity in other public and private institutions to incorporate Digital Inclusion policies and practices into their ongoing operations and programs. Learn about the Digital Equity Bill of Rights at our companion site, [Internet For All Now](#).