



COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

Board of Supervisors

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February 15, 2024

Chairwoman Kay Granger
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Chairwoman Patty Murray
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Steve Womack
House Appropriation on Financial Services &
Government Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Chris Van Hollen
House Appropriation on Financial Services
& Government Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Save the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and our investment in broadband

Dear Chair Granger, Chair Womack, Chair Murray, and Chair Van Hollen,

More than 2.8 million households in California depend on the Affordable Connectivity Program's (ACP) subsidies and discounts to afford important broadband internet services. In Mendocino County alone, 2,000 out of 13,000 ACP eligible households benefit from this program. By giving equal importance to affordability and infrastructure expansion, the ACP plays a significant role in bridging the digital divide and promoting fair access to vital online services such as job search, healthcare, and education for all Americans.

However, the ACP sunsets in April and Congress's failure to extend this program would sever the connection to affordable, reliable broadband access to these 2.8 million Californian households and more than 20 million households nationwide. The loss of the ACP would also reduce the effectiveness of Congress' \$42 billion investment in the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Act. The ACP is necessary to maximize BEAD program dollars intended to build our nation's broadband infrastructure and ensure no community is left behind.

We strongly support the bi-cameral, bi-partisan Affordable Connectivity Program Extension Act to ensure this vital program continues to help keep America online. Universal access to high-speed internet is critical to our rural economy, education, health, and well-being. Investment in broadband connectivity is one of the essential investments in connecting rural communities to opportunities. The

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pandemic significantly underscored the importance of making broadband accessible and affordable to all Americans, which prompted the federal government to pass a series of funding acts to spur broadband deployment across the country.

Likewise, in 2021, the state Legislature and Governor invested an unprecedented \$6 billion in expanding internet connectivity to all Californians. This funding will keep Americans connected as Congress continues to work to develop a permanent funding pathway for this critical broadband program. As Congress finalizes Fiscal Year 2024 funding, please include language to extend the Affordable Connectivity Program.

Access to broadband is a top priority for local governments, as they recognize its critical role in expanding opportunities. It is essential to ensure that broadband infrastructure exists in underserved, rural areas. Moreover, it is equally important to guarantee that residents can afford to access it. The continuation of the ACP is crucial to achieving these goals.

Sincerely,



Maureen Mulheren, Chair
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

CC: Congressman Jared Huffman
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors