

DARCIE ANTLE
INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
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COUNTY OF MENDOCINO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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June 27, 2022

Robert Osborn
Director | Communications Division
California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: Support Continuation of NBNCBC

Dear Mr. Osborn:

The County of Mendocino has appreciated and benefitted from participation in California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) Consortia Grants, through the North Bay/ North Coast Broadband Consortium (NBNCBC), since its inception in 2014. The organization remains our County's primary conduit of information on broadband policy and infrastructure planning.

While the outlook is positive for increased connectivity with the passage of SB 156, the County of Mendocino continues to rely on the capacity and cooperation of the Consortium to help guide us through these crucial years of planning and implementation of Middle and Last Mile projects.

Yet, residents of Mendocino County remain unserved by adequate broadband in a world where it is increasingly impossible for people to live and work without access. By some measurements, Mendocino County has the 7th lowest broadband access percentage out of California's 58 counties, at only 75.2% of households served. Corollary effects from lack of access and infrastructure impact first responders' ability to communicate in times of emergency; farmers' ability to adopt modernized farming practices (e.g., AgTech); students' ability to do homework effectively at home; healthcare patients' ability to utilize telehealth; and tourists' ability to explore our County effectively using mobile applications. Our community's deficit also stems from digital illiteracy and unaffordable internet services/devices, which hinder the expansion and retention of a local workforce and discourages disadvantaged communities from receiving equitable opportunities.

To help address these problems, the County of Mendocino strongly supports the continuation of the North Bay/North Coast Broadband Consortium.

NBNCBC's goal is to bring fast, affordable, and reliable broadband services to all communities in each County and across the region by tackling broadband issues and finding sustainable long-term solutions. In addition to their work on broadband infrastructure and adoption projects, NBNCBC's involvement in regional, state, and federal legislative advocacy efforts has proven highly effective. In addition,

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NBNCBC's continued collaboration with statewide organizations has forged new partnerships and opportunities for Sonoma County, sparking innovation and economic resiliency.

We urge approval of funding the NBNCBC proposal and its plan of action. Thank you for your past efforts in supporting the NBNCBC's formation in 2014/2015, 2017/2018, 2019-2022, and hopefully again from 2023-2025! We trust that you have recognized NBNCBC's past achievements and support its ongoing efforts in working to close the Digital Divide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the letters 'T' and 'W' in a cursive, stylized font.

Ted Williams, Chair
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors