



Community, Equity, Action

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April 5, 2021

Hon. Senator Ben Hueso, Chair
Senate Committee on Energy, Utilities and Communications
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: SUPPORT SB 4 (Gonzalez) as amended March 25, 2021

Dear Senator Hueso,

Livable California, a nonprofit that advocates for truly affordable housing, self-determination of local government, and protecting equity and livability, **strongly supports SB 4.**

The objective of SB 4, to expedite the deployment of broadband infrastructure and internet service to underserved rural and urban communities, is laudable.

The specifics and funding contained in the bill are well defined to achieve that objective and help mitigate the digital divide that has plagued California:

- Coordination by the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development, known as "GO-Biz".
- Requiring the Public Utilities Commission to prioritize projects in underserved areas with a goal of achieving at least 100 mbps.
- Funded by requiring the PUC to ensure that each service supplier remits to the commission revenues from a monthly surcharge not to exceed \$0.23 per month per access line.

- Prioritize projects that provide last-mile broadband access to households that are unserved by an existing facility-based broadband provider and prioritize projects in underserved areas where internet connectivity is available only at speeds at or below 10 mbps downstream and 1 mbps upstream or areas with no internet connectivity, with a goal of achieving at least 100 mbps downstream.
- The bill would require robust reporting toward the achievement of the goal, including fiscal and performance audits of the implementation and effectiveness.

SB 4 is a significant bill to help reduce inequality caused by California's persistent digital divide. Rural communities with low population density and low-income residents lack broadband, leaving 2.3 million Californians without broadband access.

Livable California strongly supports teleworking and broadband expansion. We have seen major benefits of teleworking during the pandemic and expect teleworking to continue to be a popular alternative for employees and employers, long after the pandemic is over.

Teleworking allows people more choice of location and lifestyle. It provides geographic and economic equity to communities across California that have, until now, not been able to participate in the economic benefits of the high-cost over-concentrated urban centers.

It also helps mitigate the housing affordability crisis as people choose locations with lower housing costs. We have seen rents in dense urban centers like San Francisco fall.

We welcome changes to facilitate teleworking and strongly **support SB 4**

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors of Livable California



Rick Hall, President
T Keith Gurnee, Member
Carey White, Member
Isaiah Madison, Member