

**SCLC POLICY STATEMENT
SETTING FORTH SUPPORT TO INCREASE BROADBAND ACCESS TO UNDERSERVED
COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

WHEREAS, closing the digital divide is important and provides long-term community benefits that include the ability to fully engage in the digital economy, access existing and emerging services, expands economic opportunities and bridges the economic divide; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the need for available, reliable and affordable broadband services in all communities; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused schools to shift to distance learning; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has made the digital divide within underserved communities and/or areas (which include people of color, low income households, residents in rural areas, and senior citizens) more apparent; and

WHEREAS, we recognize that cost and household income is a primary barrier to broadband access; and

WHEREAS, all residents, businesses and institutions need high speed broadband services where they work, live, learn and play; and

WHEREAS, high speed broadband enables Work from Home and remote workers, enhances business efficiencies, drives job creation throughout the region, and connects customers and partners worldwide to goods and services; and

WHEREAS, high speed broadband is a “green technology” that reduces our impact on the environment, shrinks our regional carbon footprint, offsetting vehicle trips and use of resources; and

WHEREAS, high speed broadband greatly expands the ability of residents to access medical, behavioral, oral health services and the capacity of public health officials to monitor and respond to health threats such as COVID-19 and other diseases; and

WHEREAS, high speed broadband enables greater civic participation and brings communities together, helps improve public safety, and makes our transportation systems more resilient and efficient; and

WHEREAS, effective emergency services require using high speed broadband to integrate data in real time from all available sources, so decision makers have access to the information necessary for the protection of lives and property; and

WHEREAS, to accelerate the deployment of broadband, the primary objective is to deploy private-sector capital as quickly as possible through improved public cooperation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED on this 10th day of February 2021 that the Southern California Leadership Council does hereby take the following position:

1. Supports FCCs (United States Federal Communications Commission) and CPUCs (California Public Utilities Commission) rules, regulations, programs and funding opportunities that support broadband deployment opportunities to bridge the digital divide.
2. Supports Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-73-20 signed August 14, 2020 that seeks to accelerate work towards closing gaps in access to reliable broadband networks throughout California; and
3. Supports collaboration with [Los Angeles, Orange, Imperial, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego and Ventura Counties], broadband providers, school districts (K-12), community college districts, universities, community and business stakeholders, Regional Broadband Consortiums, California Emerging Technology Fund, the State of California and other federal and regional organizations that have similar goals to increase broadband access throughout Southern California; and
4. Determines that closing the digital divide is important and provides long-term community benefits; and
5. Supports the request for grant funding from the State and/or Federal government for a regional program that provides funding for free internet access for qualifying residents that bridges the economic digital divide; and
6. Supports a minimum broadband speed capability of 100 megabits per second today and 1 gigabit per second by 2030 for all residential and business customers within the urban, suburban and rural communities of our region; and
7. Supports working with collaborating jurisdictions to affect the deployment decisions of broadband providers by lowering permitting fees to a reasonable level, reduce the cost of entry and operation of broadband systems in our communities, reduce the risks of delays during the planning, permitting and construction phases, provide opportunities for increasing revenue, and creating new avenues for competitive entry; and
8. Supports working with collaborating jurisdictions to identify broadband opportunity zones in underserved communities; and
9. Upon identifying broadband opportunity zones, supports the adoption of an emergency ordinance which would allow local jurisdictions to develop specific rules to expedite low cost broadband deployment such as: waivers for microprojects, deployment of broadband infrastructure in underserved communities and fixed wireless or other broadband technologies in rural communities; and

10. Supports the adoption of consistent fees and expedited broadband permitting processes within collaborating jurisdictions; and
11. Supports the concept of “Dig Smart” and/or “Dig Once” whereby conduit is installed for future or immediate use for wireless towers, fiber optic or other comparable broadband network installation, whenever underground construction occurs in a roadway.