



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
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RESOLUTION NO. 21-629-2

A RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS SETTING FORTH SUPPORT TO INCREASE BROADBAND ACCESS TO BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE THROUGHOUT SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

WHEREAS, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is a Joint Powers Agency established pursuant to California Government Code Section 6502 et seq.;

WHEREAS, SCAG is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the counties of Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura, Orange and Imperial, pursuant to Title 23, United States Code Section 134(d);

WHEREAS, SCAG is responsible for bringing Southern California’s diverse residents and local partners together with unifying regional plans, policies, and programs that result in more healthy, sustainable, and economically resilient communities;

WHEREAS, SCAG recognizes 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;

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

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

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;

WHEREAS, SCAG recognizes that lack of infrastructure, cost and household income are key barriers to broadband access;

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

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;

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 saving energy;

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Attachment: Resolution No. 21-629-2 (Resolution for SCAG to Bridge the Digital Divide in Underserved Communities)

WHEREAS, high speed broadband greatly expands the ability of residents throughout the region 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;

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;

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;

WHEREAS, evaluating and/or developing strategies to bridge the digital divide would support SCAG’s commitment to address equity issues throughout the SCAG region (Resolution 20-623-2);

WHEREAS, evaluating and/or developing strategies to bridge the digital divide would assist in implementing the 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategies (Connect SoCal);

WHEREAS, evaluating and/or developing strategies to bridge the digital divide would assist in the development of future Regional Transportation Plans/Sustainable Communities Strategies.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Regional Council of the Southern California Association of Governments:

1. Declares that bridging the digital divide is integral to developing a healthy, resilient and economically competitive region;
2. Supports the FCC’s (United States Federal Communications Commission) and CPUC’s (California Public Utilities Commission) rules, regulations, programs and funding opportunities that support broadband deployment opportunities to bridge the digital divide;
3. 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;
4. Supports collaboration with local jurisdictions within the SCAG region, broadband providers, school districts (K-12), community college districts, universities, community and business stakeholders, Regional Broadband Consortiums, California Emerging Technology Fund, MPOs, the State of California and other federal and regional organizations that have similar goals to increase broadband access throughout Southern California;
5. Hereby directs staff to develop a Broadband Action Plan which may include but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Develop a model resolution and policy paper addressing the digital divide, for local jurisdictions to adopt;
 - b. Pursue grant funding opportunities and seek partnerships to assist local jurisdictions with broadband implementation, including a regional broadband needs assessment, to complement State efforts;

- c. Convene a working group which would act as a venue for SCAG, local jurisdictions, broadband providers and stakeholders to develop solutions to allow for rapid deployment of broadband technology such as: streamlining the permit process, lower fees to a reasonable level, reduce the cost of entry and operation of broadband systems within underserved communities;
- d. Include broadband planning, data and research findings, and strategies, as appropriate, as part of SCAG’s efforts to ensure an inclusive Regional Economic Recovery and Strategy;
- e. Incorporate broadband planning, data and research findings, and strategies, as appropriate, into existing SCAG programs (Environmental Justice, Transportation Demand Management, Goods Movement, Sustainability, Resilience, etc.);
- f. Based on SCAG’s findings, utilize data as part of Scenario Planning Process for upcoming and future Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategies.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED, by the Regional Council of the Southern California Association of Governments at its regular meeting this 4th day of February, 2021:

Rex Richardson
President, SCAG
Councilmember, City of Long Beach

Attested by:

Kome Ajise
Executive Director

Approved as to Form:

Michael Houston
Chief Counsel