

Broadband Alliance of Mendocino County

December 15, 2013

Congressman Jared Huffman
Washington, D.C.

Subject: **Improve Internet Access in Schools and Libraries**

Dear Congressman Huffman,

As you know from your visits to Mendocino county, lack of access to broadband Internet is creating a deeper and wider Digital Divide compared to the urban areas that are mostly Served. In 2013, several county schools still only have T1 lines for internet access, greatly limiting our student's ability to learn and prepare for their lives in a 21st Century world. Our libraries are equally disadvantaged in their efforts to support the needs of the rural population, especially since an estimated 50% of households in the county are at best Underserved, and in many cases Unserved.

Therefore, we appreciate Congress taking a strong stance in favor of reform and helping to strengthen this important program that increases high-speed broadband for our rural schools, libraries and Unserved neighborhoods.

Part of the focus of E-rate reform must be on the **'broadband silos'** that are created **around** school campuses since the regulations only subsidize connections **to** the COEs and school campuses. When our children go home after school, many on long bus rides, they have inadequate access to perform their studies. E-rate must be modified to support broadband deployment into the rural Unserved neighborhoods where our students live. State Superintendent of Schools Tom Torlakson's goal is:

*Ensure that every student has access to at least one Internet connected device for learning **any time, any place**; often called 1:1 or One-to-One technology learning initiatives.*

A large percentage of our households will not be equipped to meet Supt. Torlakson's near-term goal without subsidized broadband infrastructure deployment. E-rate reform will make it possible to meet this goal.

Attached, please see statements from the Point Arena school superintendent (p.2) and the county librarian (p.3) struggling to get their jobs done without proper broadband tools.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Jim Moorehead, Chair

Cc: Paul Tichinin, Mendocino County Superintendent of Schools
Mindy Kittay, Mendocino County Librarian
Dan Hamburg, Chair, Mendocino County Board of Supervisors
Colleen Cross, Point Arena Schools Superintendent

Attach: *Looking for Broadband.09-03-13 0750.pdf*

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