



Broadband Alliance Public Outreach Minutes

Friday, March 6th, 2020 10 am-12:00 noon
Community Foundation of Mendocino County

Call to Order:

Introductions

Kathy Wylie, Mike Nicholls, Sheba Brown, Emily Techchio, Brian Bottari, Jeff Tyrrell, Supervisor Haschak, Calvin Sandeen, Jim Moorehead, and Annemarie Weibel participated.

Words from the Chair: Tabled by Chair:

Update from Elected Representatives:

Congressman Huffman

On behalf of Congressman Huffman, Sheba Brown provided overview HR 4227 and HR 4229 covered in more detail later in the minutes. It was also acknowledged that Congressman Huffman had a productive meeting with CEO Angelo and Supervisor Williams, along with the BAMC Administrator to discuss broadband related matters.

Senator McGuire: [Report provided]

[SB-431 Mobile telephony service base transceiver station towers: communications infrastructure: performance reliability standards](#)

This bill would mandate telecommunication providers have backup power systems for their cell towers. That bill was strengthened even further with new amendments that will add cable service providers to the power backup mandate, and lengthen the amount of time the backup power system operates to no less than 72 hours.

SB 431 requires that cell towers located in high fire threat zones (these high risk areas are where the majority of power shutoffs have been happening) have backup power for no less than 72 hours by July 1, 2021. It empowers the California Public Utilities Commission to develop desperately needed regulations to keep cell towers energized during extended power shutoffs.

"During last year's power outage debacle, nearly 2 million Northern California residents had their landline, cell phone and cable service interrupted. Our phones are our lifelines. It's how we keep in touch with the rest of the world and how we receive emergency alerts. Telecom representatives assured us this worst case scenario, hundreds of cell towers going down due to the lack of power, wouldn't happen. It's simply not true. It's time California steps up and mandates cell towers have backup power. This bill isn't about checking your Facebook status. It's about life and death," Senator Mike McGuire said.

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Assemblymember Wood: No report, other than expression of support for CASF grant proposal.

Supervisor Williams: No report

Community Partner Reports:

Office of Emergency Services: No report

Schools /Mendocino County Office of Education: No report

Reiteration of Public Outreach Meeting Calendar:

[Quarterly 1st Friday's:, Jun 5th, Sept. 4th, Dec. 4th]

[Steering Committee phone-meetings: May 21, Aug. 21, Nov 19]

VI. County Broadband Coordination

Pilot project idea- Tabled

FirstNet research- Tabled, but briefly described as research effort to better understand FirstNet's obligation to provide 99% geographical coverage for first responders.

Copper transition research- Tabled

Pending or Recent Legislation:

["H.R. 4227 — 116th Congress: Mapping Accuracy Promotes Services Act."](#)

The MAPS Act (HR 4227) -- passed by the House of Representatives on December 16, 2019 -- would prohibit any person from willfully, knowingly, or recklessly submitting inaccurate information or data related to the geographic coverage of broadband Internet service to the Federal Communications Commission. Violators would be subject to criminal and civil penalties in the same amounts currently imposed on anyone who knowingly provides inaccurate information to the FCC.

[H.R. 4229 — 116th Congress: Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technological Availability Act."](#)

The Broadband Data Act makes several changes to the way the FCC collects, verifies and reports broadband data. Changes include:

Eliminating the current data collection model and implementing the Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric, a system that utilizes geocoding to map coverage. Currently, mapping is based on U.S. Census blocks. Internet Service Providers (ISP) count a block "covered" if one household in that block has 25 Mbps (megabytes per second) internet service or higher. This can result in major data discrepancies as many households may be inaccurately marked as covered.

Requiring the FCC to develop processes for any person or entity to submit broadband availability data to verify or challenge the FCC's database or maps.

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Directing the FCC to update the granular data every six months and to make it publicly available.

Allowing the FCC to contract out the creation and maintenance of the mapping system to a private firm(s) for no longer than five years with a competitive, open and transparent bidding process.

The bill authorizes \$28 million total for FYs 2020 and 2021 for the FCC to issue rules, establish reporting requirements and hire contractors to establish a comprehensive broadband database and maps. Counties support the changes outlined in S. 1822/H.R. 4229

[Rural Digital Opportunity Fund \(RDOF\)](#)

From RCRC: “The new program will invest \$2 billion annually in rural broadband deployment, and replace the Connect America Fund (CAF) as the Commission’s primary investment vehicle in rural broadband deployment.

The legal authorization for CAF is set to expire in 2020. RDOF will invest \$2 billion annually in rural broadband deployment projects over a ten-year period for a total investment of \$20 billion. RDOF will also raise the minimum speed threshold from 10 megabits per second (mbps) download and 1 mbps upload speeds to 25 mbps download and 3 mbps upload. Increasing the minimum speed threshold will require applicants to provide faster internet connections for rural customers, in order to be eligible for program funding.

The RDOF launch is a welcome announcement for rural communities that faced uncertainty for the future of the FCC’s investment in rural broadband deployment. Rural communities will continue to advocate for more funding for rural broadband, but the RDOF will carry on CAF’s legacy for broadband investments in underserved rural areas.”

Mike Nicholls & Calvin Sandeen – NBNCBC Update

Calvin Sandeen described the work and partnerships involved in assembling the CASF grant application. Through the Community Foundation, the Broadband Alliance is helping with the outreach in gathering letters of support. The North Bay North Coast Broadband Consortium is managing the team which include a emerging non-profit WiConduit, and Hunter Communications, an Oregon company which will deploy the fiber optic cables from Hopland to Laytonville and over to Covelo, in phase one of three county projects.

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Supervisor Haschak asked when we might know if we will get the grant, and November 2020 was estimated. However the CPUC often works past deadlines, and in the interim has delayed the official April 1 grant deadline.

Calvin also described an Economic Industry Resilience Forum that he organized through the Economic Development Agency, which was subsequently cancelled.

Updates on Sonoma County and regional broadband activities

The Consortium is trying to bring identified dark-fiber online in Marin County to improve services and provide resiliency through redundancy.

Other Updates, Final Comments and Future Agenda items

Chair Kathy Wylie asked if the group had any objections approving a letter of support for the CASF Grant Application, and received approval.

Annemarie Weibel commented that the audio of the meeting is better than it has been in the past, and looks forward to video meetings in the future. She expressed concerns surrounding fires danger of cell towers, and was grateful that the California Advance Services Funds grant application was for underground fiber-optics, which don't pose a fire risk.

Chair Wylie reminded the group of future meeting date and thanked everyone for participating.

Next meeting: Friday, June 5th, 2020

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