

CALIFORNIA

ALL

Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative

Middle-Mile Advisory Committee Meeting

January 16, 2026

Minutes and Transcript

The Middle-Mile Advisory Committee met on Friday, January 16th at 10:00am PST via virtual conference and in-person.

Agenda Item 1: Welcome

Chief Deputy Director Bailey-Crimmins welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all MMAC members, designees, presenters and attendees.

A quorum for the meeting was established.

Member	Designee	Present	Absent
California Department of Technology	CIO & Directorate Bailey-Crimmins	X	
Government Operations Agency	Secretary Maduros	X	
California Public Utilities Commission	President Reynolds	X	
Department of Finance	Chief Deputy Director Perrault	X	
Department of Transportation	Director Dina El-Tawansy	Dave Moore	X
State Senate	Senator Gonzalez	Trevor Taylor	X
State Senate	Senator Caballero	Designee was Mariel Garcia	X
State Assembly	Assembly Member Tasha Boerner		X

State Assembly	Assembly Member Aguiar-Curry		X	
County of Monterey, District 1	Supervisor Alejo		X	
County of Del Norte, District 2	Supervisor Starkey			X

Agenda Item 2: Executive Report Out

- **Jared Johnson, CDT Chief Deputy Director** provided the first update for the Executive Summary Report:
 - Highlighted strong progress on the Middle Mile Broadband Network, with over 60% of the network permitted and over 40% of the network constructed as of December 2025.
 - Noted that some construction will extend beyond 2026, primarily due to permitting complexities.
 - Described establishment of a State Permitting Strike Team in July 2025 to accelerate permitting and address bottlenecks.
 - Clarified that permitting involves coordination across multiple entities, including CDT, Caltrans, federal agencies, and project partners.
 - Reaffirmed the State's commitment to delivering the full network and closing the digital divide.
- **Mark Monroe, MMBI Deputy Director** provided second update for the Executive Summary Report:
 - Reported that more than 5,275 miles of network are permitted, over 5,100 miles have entered construction, and more than 3,389 miles have completed fiber construction.
 - Described ongoing mitigation strategies to streamline permitting, including refined network design, alternative routing, compressed construction timelines, and weekly coordination with partners and Caltrans.
 - Noted recent permitting throughput averaging approximately 75 miles per month.
 - Emphasized coordination with CPUC to ensure Federal Funding Account (FFA) projects have Middle Mile connectivity when ready.
 - Provided an update on operator procurement, with proposals due January 28 and selection anticipated by April.

- Announced Bishop Paiute Tribe as the first community expected to connect to the Middle Mile network via the Digital 395 corridor.

Agenda Item 3: Project Updates

CDT

- **Mark Monroe, CDT's** update:
 - Announced first operational service expected in March 2026 along the Digital 395 corridor in partnership with the Bishop Paiute Tribe.
 - Described state acquisition of Digital 395 assets and investments to upgrade huts and electronics to integrate with the broader Middle Mile network.
 - Explained interim operational approach utilizing Golden State Net (GSN), California Broadband Cooperative, and Onward while a long-term operator is selected.
 - Outlined the three-party operating model: CDT (program oversight), GSN (third-party administrator), and network operator (day-to-day operations).
 - Reviewed operator RFP schedule and phased activation of network segments beginning in 2026.
- **Shannon Martin-Guzman, CDT Project Delivery Manager** provided an update on the installation progress, government-to-government partnerships and hut installation progress:
 - Reported approximately 5,200 miles in active installation statewide and 42% of network in the ground.
 - Described continued growth in construction despite geographic, environmental, and permitting challenges.
 - Provided high-level progress across major partners (ADF, Arcadian, Lumen, Hoopa Valley, Yurok Tel, Siskiyou Tel, Vero, CVIN, Karuk Tribe, Gateway Cities, LA Bureau of Street Lighting, Fort Bragg).
 - Reported hut program status:
 - 139 total hubs required statewide.
 - Electronics installed at all 11 Digital 395 huts.
 - Construction underway at 5 new sites, with ~52 additional sites planned to begin in Q1.
 - Emphasized huts as critical to enabling network operations.

- **Monica Hernandez** **Monica Hernandez, CDT Deputy Director of Communications & Stakeholder Relations** gave an update on MMBI Stakeholder Engagement efforts:
 - Provided overview of MMBI stakeholder engagement program and cross-sector meetings.
 - Noted declining attendance trends but continued value from core stakeholder participants.
 - Summarized recurring stakeholder themes: affordability, pricing models, consumer protections, operations timeline, and communications with ISPs.
 - Confirmed CDT will continue stakeholder meetings and adjust format as needed.
 - Introduced guest speaker from City of Fort Bragg to highlight local partnership and project implementation.
- **Sarah McCormick (Guest Speaker), City of Fort Bragg Housing & Economic Development Manager**
 - Described Fort Bragg's joint-build partnership with CDT and progress on local construction.
 - Reported receipt of approximately \$10.3M in FFA funding and additional financing sources.
 - Noted drilling nearly complete, with conduit, vault installation, and fiber pull forthcoming.
 - Highlighted creation of a city-owned broadband utility and acquisition of local ISP.
 - Emphasized project benefits for economic diversification, digital equity, and community services.
- **Steven Orihuela (Guest Speaker) Bishop Paiute Chairman**
 - Described broadband as essential infrastructure for tribal communities.
 - Highlighted role of Middle Mile connectivity in supporting economic development, education, healthcare, and tribal sovereignty.
 - Noted Bishop Paiute Tribe's NTIA grant supporting last-mile deployment.
 - Confirmed expectation of significant speed improvements and establishment of tribal ISP.
 - Emphasized importance of tribal inclusion in Middle Mile planning and operations.

Caltrans

- **Elias Karam, Assistant Deputy Director, MMBI**, gave an update on Caltrans Builds and Partner Builds & Encroachment Permits:
 - I. **Caltrans Build Progress:**
 - 305 miles of network under Caltrans responsibility
 - All pre-construction is complete
 - 178 miles in construction, 120 miles completed, 7 miles tied to Dig Smart efforts
 - II. **Network Hub Development:**
 - Caltrans is overseeing pre-construction for 107 network hubs
 - For 101 of the hubs, the design is complete
 - For 6 of the hubs, the design is complete
 - 101 hubs have completed design and are ready for construction by CDT.
 - 6 hubs are actively in design and expected to complete by spring 2026.
 - III. **Encroachment Permit Improvements:**
 - Caltrans Division of Traffic Operations continues to support issuance of encroachment permits for CDT partner builds.
- **Aung Maung, DOT Deputy Director, Maintenance & Operations**, gave a detailed update on encroachment permit applications:
 - CDT anticipates approximately 3,337 miles of Middle Mile Broadband Network to be installed within State Highway right-of-way.
 - As of January 13, Caltrans has received encroachment permit applications covering 2,878 miles, with an additional 445 miles submitted as preliminary applications.
 - Of the 2,878 miles formally submitted, Caltrans has issued encroachment permits for 1,045 miles.
 - Caltrans District teams are actively supporting CDT partners with design and environmental documentation for the remaining 1,833 miles currently in intake, screening, and functional review stages.
 - Month-by-month permit data shows a positive upward trend since July 2025, reflecting increased throughput.
 - Improvements are attributed to monthly discovery workshops and weekly permit-intensive coordination meetings between CDT, Caltrans, and CDT partners.
 - Permit status is tracked by CDT partner, with miles distributed across preliminary, in-progress, and issued categories.

- Caltrans has received 683 encroachment permit applications and has issued 354 permits (approximately 52% issuance rate).
- Some permits represent localized connections (e.g., highway crossings) with minimal or no associated mileage but are critical for network connectivity.
- Caltrans reaffirmed its commitment to assisting CDT partners with completing applications and expediting issuance of encroachment permits to support delivery of the Middle Mile Broadband Network.

GoldenStateNet (GSN)

- **Erik Hunsinger, GSN President and Chief Operating Officer** provided an update on commercial engagement and network operations planning for the Middle Mile Broadband Network:
 - Reviewed GSN's role as Third-Party Administrator providing commercial oversight and best practices.
 - Described responsibilities including hut management, business development, and network expansion planning.
 - Reported approximately 30 commercial opportunities quoted, totaling roughly \$310M in potential value.
 - Noted strong market interest and potential for initial commercial contracts in 2026.

CPUC

- **Maria Ellis, CPUC Deputy Director** provided an update on state and federal broadband grant programs and last-mile funding alignment with the Middle Mile Broadband Network:
 - Provided update on CASF Infrastructure Grant Program (\$60M available; applications due October 31).
 - Reported on Federal Funding Account (FFA) awards: \$1.15B in Round 1 across 52 counties.
 - Noted Round 2 oversubscription with ~\$600M requested for ~\$240M available.
 - Provided BEAD update: \$1.86B allocated to California; application window July 19–August 2, with extension request to October 2.
 - Emphasized alignment of last-mile programs with Middle Mile Network.

Agenda Item 4: Public Comment

Public comments were made by:

- Tracy Phine, Rural County Representative
- Patrick Messac, Oakland Undivided
- Ben Hewlett, Last Mile FFA
- Lindsey Skolnick, CADE

Public commenters expressed strong support for the Middle Mile Broadband Network while highlighting key concerns and opportunities. Comments emphasized the need for clear and consistent permitting guidance, particularly for aerial infrastructure and pole replacements, and called for last-mile projects to be fully integrated into Middle Mile planning. Commenters also stressed the importance of affordable access to the network, noting that high pricing could undermine efforts to connect underserved communities. Additional comments underscored the need for a flexible and responsive third-party administrator to support timely contracting, especially for public institutions and non-commercial entities with available funding.

Members Final Comments

N/A.

Closing Remarks

Chief Deputy Director Bailey-Crimmins thanked everyone for their attendance and participation. The next meeting will be Friday, April 17th from 10am – 12pm. The meeting adjourned at 12 pm.

Transcript

The Chair: Good morning and happy New Year. Welcome to the January 16th, 2026, Middle Mile Advisory Committee. And we're going to call the meeting to order. The first order of business is roll call, Miss Alvarado, please call roll.

Alicia Alvarado: Thank you, Madam Chair. Housekeeping Rules Statement. Attendees please note there is time allocated at the end of the meeting for public comment. Presenters, please queue Christine to advance your slides. And committee members, please use the Raise Hand feature on Zoom to queue the chair to call you on to speak. Now committee member roll call Chair Bailey-Crimmins

The Chair: Here.

Alicia Alvarado: Secretary Maduros. President Reynolds.

President Reynolds: Here.

Alicia Alvarado: Chief Deputy Director Perrault

Chief Deputy Director Perrault: Here.

Alicia Alvarado: Director Dina El-Tawansy.

Dave Moore: Dave Moore, Acting Chief Deputy for Dina El-Tawansy.

Alicia Alvarado: Senator Gonzalez. Senator Caballero.

Mariel Garcia: Hello. My name is Mariel Garcia, and I am the Field Representative for Senator Ana Caballero, and I'll be here representing this for her.

Alicia Alvarado: Thank you. Assembly Member Boerner. Assembly Member Aguiar-Curry, Supervisor Alejo.

Supervisor Alejo: President on Zoom. Thank you.

Alicia Alvarado: Supervisor Starkey. Madam Chair, we have a quorum.

The Chair: Thank you, Miss Alvarado. Well, first of all, again, happy New Year. Today you're going to hear critical updates regarding the Broadband Middle Mile initiative. It is California's historic investment in addressing digital equity. I'm also very excited today to have several special guest. First, online, we have Sarah McCormick, who is an economic development manager from the City of Fort Bragg. We also have the honor of having Chairman Steven Orihuela from the Bishop Paiute Tribe, and we look forward to hearing their presentations today. Thank you so much for being here. Since we are starting a new year, I do want to just take a few moments at the beginning to say a few opening remarks. The first is the Middle Mile Broadband initiative is a collective goal. One, to ensure access to reliable, affordable Internet services that's an accessible basic resource available to all communities regardless of geography or income. When this program was launched, we set an ambitious goal of accomplishing construction of over 8100 miles by December 2026. I will level set with all of you. Typically, it takes more than two years to build 500 miles, let alone accomplish 8100 in four years. If we subscribed to doing it the typical way or how it's always been done, this would have potentially been a

10 year project. But that just doesn't work for California and the people that we serve. We have remained focused, agile and innovative. And as you've seen in prior MMAC's, we have had challenges and it has become evident based on the challenges that we have received that we will have to push some of the construction beyond 2026. During today's staff presentations, you're going to hear additional details. You're going to hear about the shared progress that we have made collectively and the challenges that we continue to face building the nation's largest Open Access middle mile network. But it is important that we remember the why, why this once in a lifetime investment and commitment. And how we collectively, between the administration and the legislature, are working together with our partners to continue to invest in Californians and close the digital divide. The Middle Mile Network is designed to be a barrier breaker. It is not a solution on its own, but it is a critical backbone that makes these last mile construction efforts we've coordinate with CPUC feasible, affordable and sustainable, especially in the areas where the private market has not invested. Our commitment is that the state will go where private interests have not and will not at the scale and speed needed to serve communities. Our work is not finished until every single contracted mile in the 8100 mile network is constructed and operational. That concludes my opening remarks. And as we typically allow each of the Middle Mile Advisory Committee members to also have comments and ask questions, I would like to open it up to my colleagues first in the room and then online. Are there any opening comments? All right, I see none. Are there any online? All right, I see none. We'll go ahead and turn it over to the first presentation, Jared Johnson, Chief Deputy Director at the California Department of Technology. We'll start the program presentation.

Jared Johnson: Thank you, Chair. Good morning, members and good morning, members of the public. As the Chair underscored, we are here because we have a network to deliver, a network that removes significant barriers to digital equity in California. As we look ahead to 2026, it's important to pause and recognize the excellent progress that has already been made. As of December of last year, we have permitted over 60% of the network and completed construction on over 40% of the network. This is no small feat considering this is the largest Open Access middle mile network in the nation. We want to be direct about where we stand on timing. We continue to make excellent progress, but some construction of the network will extend beyond 2026. In January of last year, we identified permitting as a bottleneck in our ability to complete construction by 2026. Without permits, construction cannot proceed. In July 2025, we established a state strike team to address the pace of permitting, and we are already seeing results. I also want to clarify something that often gets oversimplified. When we say permits, people tend to think solely of Caltrans. Permits for this project involve not only Caltrans, but CDT, federal agencies, and our partners working together to prepare, review and approve

permit applications. It's a complex landscape of laws, requirements and studies, creating a unique challenge for any project, but especially the nation's largest of its kind. And while we continue to focus on these project activities, we also remind ourselves every day that this project is about the people of California and closing the digital divide. Ultimately, the responsibility of delivering this entire network rests with the state and our commitment has not changed. So we remain on a path to complete the full network, and we continue working to reach the underserved communities that are planning to connect to the state's network. With that overview, I would like to turn things over to Mark Monroe to continue with the executive briefing.

Mark Monroe: All right, thank you, Chief Deputy Director, and thank you, Chair again, Mark Monroe, Deputy Director, for the Middle Mile Broadband initiative here at CDT. Our goal continues to be to do everything possible to complete the network as quickly and efficiently as possible. Currently over 60%. We can go to the next slide here. Currently, over 60% or more than 5275 miles of the network has been permitted, with 2/3 or more than 5100 miles of the network having gone to construction and with fiber construction complete on over 40% or 3389 miles of the network. Given where we were in 2021 starting off building the largest network of its kind, there is a reason to be pleased at the progress of the teams and our partners. However, as Chief Deputy Johnson noted, permitting does continue to be a challenge and the state continues to focus on mitigations and additional opportunities to streamline the process. By recognizing this challenge, CDT and Caltrans have taken a number of corrective steps to accelerate the permitting process. We have refined the network design to reduce reliance on the state right of way where feasible and find alternative routes to avoid some of the most complex segments. In terms of permitting, we've compressed construction timelines where we can do so safely and responsibly, coordinating amongst our contractors and to maximize efficiency. And there are weekly sessions with our partners and Caltrans to move permit packages through the process as quickly as possible on both sides, improving application quality, resolving issues earlier and accelerating review and approval where appropriate. And these steps are showing positive results over the last three months of 2025, we're averaged about 75 miles of permits per month. And so far in January, I think we already have 38 miles permitted within the first week. And our partners continue to be optimistic that as they are able to get more miles permitted the learning curve will generate larger increases in the miles permitted in the future. In parallel, we are working closely with the California Public Utilities Commission to make sure that the middle mile network is aligned with and ready for the federal funding account last mile grant recipients who plan to leverage the network and connect. Our goal is that a federal funding account projects come online so that as they come online, they have a middle mile connection available to them when they are ready and not years in the future. On the operator front today we'll

have updates regarding how the network will be managed and made available to your last mile providers. Our current effort to find an operator is on schedule with proposals due on January 28th. So we'll be in the process of selecting an operator from that time until April of this year. And as we look to start providing service on some segments as early as July of this year. As with other infrastructure projects of this size and complexity, we do anticipate that other challenges will arise, whether they be permitting, construction, huts, electronics, but we will meet any future challenges with the same focus and urgency to keep the project moving forward. We always need to remind ourselves that this project is really about reaching people and the best way to demonstrate our steadfast commitment is to share our success. We are excited to share that the Bishop Paiute Tribe at the northern edge of the Digital 395 route will be the first community to connect to the Middle Mile broadband network. And today we are honored to be joined by Chairman Steven Orihuela, who will share more about this major milestone in our partnership. And this concludes my executive report, and I'll turn it back to the Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Johnson and Mr. Monroe, excellent executive report out. I will go ahead and open it up to any of the members who would like to make comments or have questions regarding the executive report out. All right. Do I see any online? I do want to also welcome and acknowledge we have Assembly Member Boerner and Assembly Member Aguiar-Curry that has joined us as well. All right, you see none. So we're going to go ahead and go on to the next agenda, which is the California Department of Technology's project update. With three presenters, we again have Mr. Mark Monroe, Mr. Shannon Martin-Guzman and Miss Monica Hernandez. We are also joined by Miss Sarah McCormick, the Housing and Economic Development Manager of City Fort Bragg and Chairman Steven Orihuela on the bid from the Bishop of Paiute Tribe, who will also be presenting as guest speakers. All right, we'll go ahead and turn it first over to Mark.

Mark Monroe: All right, thank you. Our collective effort over the past four years are showing tangible results for the communities that are at the heart of this historic initiative. In March, the Middle Mile broadband network will proudly serve the first community along Digital 395 route in partnership with the Bishop Paiute Tribe. More broadly, this route spans over 10,000 unserved and underserved households. Early on, CDT recognized the benefits of employing the use of existing infrastructure, such as the middle mile components of Digital 395 that were put into place by the California Broadband Cooperative. So through negotiations, the state was able to acquire assets that would best serve the residents of California. The state then decided to invest in this existing infrastructure to bring it to the same level of resiliency and performance as the rest of California's network by upgrading the huts and installing electronics consistent with the rest of the broader middle mile network. The result is that we

were able to make these assets a vital component of California's Middle Mile broadband backbone. Our commitment to serve the unserved and underserved communities is now becoming a reality. For the first time, households along this corridor will begin connecting to the Internet through the state's Middle Mile network as early as March of this year. This is an exciting moment for us and especially for the communities being served. I want to thank everyone who contributed to reaching this major milestone. Well, a long term permanent operator is still forthcoming. CDT is partnering with GSN, with the California Broadband Cooperative and its operator onward, in the short run to operate this segment as a proof of concept that the middle mile infrastructure is live, reliable, capable and supporting last mile delivery. Next slide please. Thank you. Several stakeholders have asked us to elaborate on CDT's envisioned operating model for the network and to clarify the relationship between the TPA, the operator and CDT. The state is implementing a three party operating model that includes the state, GSN as a third party administrator and an operator. This approach creates checks and balances and enables each party to focus on critical areas of expertise, including oversight and compliance, sales and customer service and connectivity, and network security and field operations. CDT will own and manage the overall program and be responsible for policy oversight, contracts and financial management, and reporting and compliance. CDT will also contract with a third party administrator, Golden State Net, to help CDT oversee the operator in addition to being responsible for Hub maintenance, network sales and marketing and future expansion of the network. And CDT will also contract directly with the operator who will be in charge of the day-to-day operations, network monitoring and service level compliance, incident response, third party dispatch as well as customer relations. And again, GSN, with its industry expertise, will assist CDT in managing the operator to verify performance. This model creates risk diversification where no single party bears the entirety of risk because it becomes shared amongst the three parties. Operations and network reliability live with the operator. Customer management lies with the TPA and oversight and compliance with the state. The model ensures that no single party can put the network at risk and by under performing because responsibilities can be temporarily handled by others as disputes are resolved. Next slide please. Here in this slide you'll see how the model really maximizes a value for the state while ensuring a reliable support structure to operate and continuously enhance a middle mile network of this size. We are deliberately leveraging the distinct strengths of both the third party administrator and the network operator to provide disciplined business and contract administration, deliver day-to-day network operations, monitoring and maintenance, and to support long term performance reliability and scalability of the network. It's important to note that these roles are intentionally non overlapping. Each function is clearly defined and mutually exclusive while collectively ensuring that CDT in the middle mile broadband network receive

the full range of business, operational and technical services required. And we can walk through a few simple scenarios here for some examples such as when the TPA is negotiating a contract with a last mile provider, it will work with the operator to validate the services that will be provided and then bring the agreement to CDT to approve and sign. This will then serve as CDT's direction to the operator regarding the services to be provided. If there's a break in service, the operator will address any repairs with electronics and work directly with our RFI squared partners to repair any fiber. And then again, GSN will assist CDT in verifying that services were restored. And in its contract with the operator, CDT will provide for accountability by identifying the operator's responsibilities regarding performance metrics and compliance monitoring a service level agreements, regular reporting, independent audits, customer feedback and mechanisms and channels, operating transparency and incident response. In these ways, each party brings its unique expertise to the table, working in sequence and coordination to achieve a successful activation from commercial readiness and contracting to technical validation, turn up and ongoing operations go to the next slide. And lastly, as you can see here in the timeline we've been and we'll continue to do fiber sales and our TPA, GSN, will share more details on the progress we've been making on that front later in the presentation. As you know, the RFP for the operator closes on January 28th. So between that time and April of this year, we will be reviewing the proposals and making our selection by the end of April. At which point we will start operating additional segments of the network as they become ready to connect. Before I turn it over to Mr. Shannon Martin-Guzman, our Project Delivery Manager for a more detailed update on the work progress of each partner as well as the status of the huts, I'd like to pause for any questions.

The Chair: Do you have any questions from members? I do not see any, but I do want to recognize Trevor Taylor, who is here for Senator Lena Gonzalez. Thank you, Trevor. All right, we can continue.

Shannon Martin-Guzman: Thank you. The program continues to work diligently to meet our goal of an operational network by December of 2026. And it is noted earlier, we plan to have an operator on board by July of this year, which would enable some routes to enter operations phase before December. Today I will be reporting on the progress made by our MMBI partners along with the high level recap of the obstacles the program has faced over the last few years while continuing to get more miles in the ground. In closing, I will report on the status of the Hut installations, next slide please. Since the October MMAC session, we have increased our installation miles by almost 800 and as of today we have a little over 5200 miles in active installation throughout the state, which includes over 3300 miles of conduit, fiber optic cable and corresponding vaults in the ground right now. As shown on the slide 65% of the network is permitted with 42% of the network in the ground. Now I would like to note that

the blue lines on the map represent 45% of the network which is still in the pre-construction phase. While designs are being finalized, permits and right away grants are obtained and environmental compliance is achieved. While there is still a lot of work to do, you can see that there is active construction taking place in communities that are dependent on the middle mile including but not limited to the Bay Area and some of our more rural communities across the state. Next slide please. All right, some of our on the ground realities. First off, I would like to start by stating the fact that we all know it's tough to build in California, but for all the right reasons. California is a beautiful state where we are doing everything we can to preserve what we have worked so hard to protect. California is one of the most geographically diverse states in the country and that in itself presents its own challenges. While we were able to plow up to a couple 1000 feet of trench a day where the terrain is open and flat, we may only be able to bore a few 100 feet a day depending on the rock type and soil conditions especially in our mountainous regions. In addition to the diverse geography, a multitude of state, local and federal authorities having jurisdiction to enforce these protections is needed. To back this, the program took a proactive approach to reduce time it takes to achieve compliance by implementing programmatic approaches, developing MOU's with applicable federal bureaus, and refined processes to expedite approval. The state and MMBI partners continue to collaborate with all involved to deliver as soon as possible. While we do acknowledge that there are challenges, that is not stopping us from continuing to progress towards our mission of closing the digital divide and getting that required infrastructure to the unserved and underserved communities in California so they can be afforded equal opportunities for economic development, educational opportunities and medical services. Next slide please. The first partner I would like to report on is American Dark Fiber. They are currently assigned 901 miles of the network. They are in the pre-construction phase on 352 miles, active construction on 415 miles and have completed 134 miles which is an increase of 100 miles since the October session. Next slide, please. Next we have Arcadian. Arcadian Infracom has moved to the construction phase on 186 of its assigned 1004 miles. While the number of miles in active construction may be concerning, the program anticipates a significant increase of miles in active construction by the April MMAC. Today, Arcadian has completed 20 of the 1004 assigned miles. Next slide please. Our next partner is Lumen. They're responsible for almost 1900 miles of the middle mile broadband network with both joint build and lease components throughout the state. Lumen primarily has existing conduits in the ground, which was a catalyst to them having over 1500 miles of construction completed along critical backbone routes of the network, which will be essential to getting connectivity to some of the more rural areas of the state. Next slide please. Next is Hoopa Valley. The Hoopa Valley Public Utilities District is a joint bill tribal partner representing the Hoopa Valley Tribe and is responsible for a 23 mile route in Humboldt County along State Route 96. Hoopa Valley is

making great progress having completed preconstruction and has installed approximately 9 of the 23 miles of conduit along the route with vault and fiber installations planned for this summer. Next slide please. The Yurok Telecommunications Corporation is another tribal partner within the program representing the Yurok Tribe. This partnership consists of 50 miles of lease fiber for two unique routes as displayed on the map. Y-Tel is currently performing preconstruction on 22 miles, active construction on 21 miles and has completed 7 miles to date. Next slide please. Siskiyou Tel has recently provided a change to the original route for an optimal build and is responsible for installation of 163 network miles in Siskiyou County. Siskiyou Tel is currently concluding their pre-construction on 89 miles and is in active construction on 6 route miles where they were able to leverage existing conduit. To date, Siskiyou Tel has completed 68 of the 163 assigned miles. Next slide please. Vero is a joint build partner with 26 miles in Humboldt County along the Northern California coast. Vero has completed all preconstruction and is now in active construction on a 2 mile bridge crossing going across the Arcada Bay. A 10 mile segment along the east side of the Arcada Bay and a 14 mile segment near the city of Trinidad are now construction complete. Next slide please. CVIN has over 2600 miles of network assigned to them throughout the state. Currently CVIN is in the pre-construction phase on over 1300 miles which includes a lot of environmentally sensitive areas and routes with documented cultural resources. CVIN is in active construction on 686 network miles with 623 miles completed to date. Next slide please. Next is the Karuk Tribe. The Karuk Tribe is another tribal joint build partner in the program who will be constructing two essential segments totaling 45 miles in Humboldt County. 15 miles are in the pre-construction phase with 30 miles in the early phases of construction now. Next slide please. Next is the Gateway Cities Council of Governments. The Gateway Cities Partnership consists of 74 network miles traversing through 24 cities in Los Angeles County. This section of the network is currently in the pre-construction phase on 67 network miles with 7 miles in active construction now. Next slide please. Next is the City of Los Angeles Bureau of St. Lighting. The City of LA Bureau of St. Lighting agreement is for a 13 mile segment from downtown Los Angeles to Gardena along the 110 on local roads. Less than one mile remains for pre-construction with 11 miles in active construction and one mile completed to date. Next slide please. Next is the City of Fort Bragg. This is a joint build partnership for a four mile stretch on Hwy 1 through the middle of the city. All preconstruction has been completed, and we are in active construction on the entire route and making great progress. Next slide please. Next is the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation. The Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation is another tribal partner in Northern California region within Del Norte County. The Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation will be constructing a 19 mile segment along Hwy 101 from Crescent City to the Oregon border. They are the newest partner within the program and is currently in the pre-construction phase for all 19 miles with construction forecasted to start in March of 2026. Next is Digital 395. This slide displays the

Digital 395 network that we purchased from the California Broadband Cooperative. The network operates along the Highway 395 corridor totaling 423 miles and 11 huts across San Bernardino, Inyo and Mono counties. We have made great progress in getting this route prepared for operation. As Mark mentioned earlier, only a few tasks remain before we can offer services and connect the first community to the network. Next slide please. Next is Zayo. Zayo is a joint build partner that completed all 194 assigned miles at the end of October last year. Next slide please. Next is TPN-299 also known as Trans Pacific Network. They are at least partner that completed all of their 171 mile assigned miles in May of last year. Next slide, please. And next is Boldyn. Boldyn is the least partner responsible for our Bay Area routes traversing through both Oakland and San Francisco. Boldyn completed all of their 81 assigned miles in June of last year. Next slide please. Next, I'd like to talk a little bit about a major phase of the project that kicked off earlier this year. And this is Hut construction, which is critical to getting services to the routes that we just reported as being construction complete. While in theory the steps presented on the slide seem pretty straightforward, there are a lot more that takes place behind the scenes before we can move through each of the phases. For example, for an engineer to complete a design is something that can be done in weeks, but there are many tasks that must take place before you can have 100% design set that is stamped and approved. This includes, but is not limited to site selection, which brings its own challenges, environmental clearance, right of way approval, State Fire Marshall approval. Concurrently while preconstruction is taking place, the huts were being manufactured, and quality assurance quality control inspections had to be performed before full production could begin. To date, all hubs are manufactured with a few minor modifications taking place before deployment this year. Then we move to the construction phase which also presents a unique set of challenges starting with development of the site. Depending on the level of development that has taken place at the designated location and the availability of power, the level of site prep is going to vary. The state has been collaborating with utility companies over the past two years and have begun preconstruction sessions. The plan for inspections and ensure that all involved are aligned before construction commences. Locations where the site is already developed may require minimal environmental work, grading and excavation, but will likely have the presence of existing utilities that must be accounted for and not impacted. While areas with slopes and elevation changes may require retaining walls, rerouting of existing drainage systems and creative engineering to ensure the locations can accommodate all of the required components, including generators and emergency backup fuel tanks. And then finally, we get to the phase of electronics installation, which we are starting as soon as the site has power with power plants commissioned. This is where we get to the technical side of things, which always has its own challenges, but with the installation of state electronics in the huts along the Digital 395 corridor, we

were able to test the process and identify efficiencies for future installations. Next slide please. The photo on the right is a milestone that I have been looking forward to since joining the program about 2 1/2 years ago. It has been quite the path to get to this point, but with the installation of the Hut, it gets just one step closer to opening the door for communities to protect. The minimal broadband network has a total of 139 hubs needed for the entire network with 107 being deployed on Caltrans right away, 21 going on public and private lands, and 11 along the Digital 395 route. Our third party administrator, Golden State Net, has played a significant role in the pre-construction of anything that falls off Caltrans right away and is leading all permitting and design efforts on these sites. GSN has submitted all 21 design packages to the State Fire Marshall and received 100% approval. They are currently working on submitting building permits along with assisting and negotiating lease agreements with landowners. These hubs are strategically placed every 50 miles and will be needed to operate the network. As noted earlier, 11 hubs were procured as part of the Digital 395 transaction with remediations and upgrades addressed over the last six months. And as of today, electronics have been installed in all 11 sites. In addition, we are in active construction at 5 new sites and plan to start construction at an additional 52 sites in Q1 of this year. In closing, I would like to say that I'm looking forward to 2026 and the amazing accomplishments on the horizon. The end is Insight and this network will be built that conclude my updates and I would like to open it up for any questions.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Martin-Guzman. Excellent work progress overall. There's a lot of that we talked about. It takes all of us to bring it all together. I think that what you just presented it does an excellent job on showing us all the pieces. So I'd like to open it up. Do any members have questions?

Secretary Maduro: I have a question.

The Chair: Sure, Secretary Maduro.

Secretary Maduro: So for those you know, I appreciate the progress and it sounds like the pace of permitting has really improved, which is great in the construction progress. For those areas where there may be gaps at the end of 2026 and there are FFA grantees who are looking to connect. Can you talk a little bit, are there mitigation efforts or other things that we can do to make sure that people are connected?

Mark Monroe: Yeah, sure. That's a great question. That's something that's really important to us. And so we're looking at a number of alternatives. You know, we met with one of the sponsors that I think it's seven different FFA projects yesterday. And part of what we were doing was to look at what is the schedule. They're not all going to start in the same day. So how do we

coordinate our efforts in terms of the permitting, in terms of the construction, how do we target that? So we have a team of people who are working with these FFA awardees to look at their schedules and see how do we focus and organize our roll out and in terms of permitting, in terms of construction to be ready when they're ready. So broadly, that's how we're approaching that. And then one of the things we'll be looking at too is to the extent there is a gap, maybe we need to look for some sort of temporary lit service or something, something to be able to provide that connection. So we're going to look for all alternatives because you're going to reaching the households. That's really what we're building this network to do and those FFA awardees, that's what they're doing. And so I think we've got about 47 of the FFA awardees that are planning to connect to MMBI. And so we're working with each of them to look at the schedule, look at the options. And then as we move forward, we'll kind of see, OK, what's our status? Do we have the permits? Is the construction going to be done? And what is their schedule looking like? And then what alternatives do we need to be considering to make sure that we do our best to get to make sure that they get service when they're ready for it.

Secretary Maduro: So you are looking at alternative options to make sure that the connection starts on time as construction completes on this last.

Mark Monroe: Yes.

Secretary Maduro: Great, thank you.

The Chair: Thank you. Any other questions from any members? I don't see any. Thank you very much. We'll go ahead and go on to the next part of the CDT update, which is a stakeholder engagement with Deputy Director and Miss Monica Hernandez.

Monica Hernandez: Thank you, Chair. I'm going to give you all a brief summary of our last stakeholder engagement meeting that was last year and preview what's ahead for 2026. Next slide please. At present, we have set the calendar for our stakeholder meetings with our first one just a few weeks away. I'd be remiss to not delineate that these larger group meetings are cross sector in addition to regular meetings the Middle Mile team has with stakeholders and partners across the state. We bring this group together for increased transparency, feedback, broader dialogue amongst our interest areas across the state and frankly to help open up connections with stakeholders. And we have seen new partnerships developed amongst community groups and advocacy groups as well. Next slide, please. Last year's final stakeholder meeting had lower attendance and lower evaluation responses and that was a trend that we saw throughout the year. Even though we get lower survey response than we would like, we have several key stakeholders who regularly

attend, engage and give us feedback at these meetings, which we have taken to heart and frankly has helped increase our transparency online as well. So we believe that there is still value in these meetings and we have no intent to stop them even if that trend continues. In our last meeting, we heard key themes. There were questions and concerns about the affordability of last mile service and pricing models.

We heard concerning questions about consumer protections in terms of use for Internet service providers and last mile customers, questions about operations, timeline and communications with Internet service providers around pricing and consumer protections. While we don't have concrete answers in that meeting or presently, we are very cognizant that these are priorities for our communities, our partners and stakeholders around the state and we hold our own responsibility. When we can communicate, we will. A lot of this is negotiation and under legal ties to not publicize, but we take it seriously and we will communicate more when we can. As we progress through the meeting calendar, we will continue to monitor attendance and feedback and pivot format or frequency as needed. Now I'm excited for the best part of my presentation, which is turning it over to our guests. You often hear me and our partners talk about our strong partnerships and relationships. It's one thing for me to talk about it. It's a much better thing to hear from our partners. So our first presenter is Miss Sarah McCormick, an Economic Development Manager with the City of Fort Bragg. And I've dubbed her the unofficial connectivity and digital equity champion for Fort Bragg and the surrounding area. So we have Sarah joining us virtually and I will turn it over to her now.

Sarah McCormick: Thank you so much. Good morning to the entire Middle Mile Advisory Committee, Chair, staff and everybody. Apologies for not being there in person. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to take the day off because we were so busy up here at broadband. Next slide please. This is an aerial view of our town. OK. So First off, I just want to say thank you so much. You can leave that side. I left this slide because it's fun. You can see really the West side of Hwy. 1 which is where we have the joint build. That's the delineation that you're seeing between a mill that has been our main economic driver for generations that had closed in 2002, and we are really looking to diversify our economy and this ability to connect to high speed, affordable, reliable Internet is going to really assist us. Next slide. So just want to do a big shout out to the governor of the state, CPUC, everybody for putting these funding programs together. We've taken advantage of all of them. We use the LATA funds to bring our desktop designs to construction level detail. We have received \$10.3 million from the Federal funding account program. At the time that we received those funds, we anticipated that was you know about 90% of our costs. I just want to reiterate the importance of this project being collaborative and challenging and the commitment and being agile like you said chair and innovative has been essential for us. Our project is now closer to 20 million and we have really

taken the leap with some debt financing loans and also Congressman Huffman chose this project to have congressional appropriated funds through the community program. So we're just really grateful for everybody who's helping us put this together. Of course, you all know about the joint build that we're doing with CDT. We are nearly complete with the drilling. We started simultaneously from both the north and the South end of towns, and we are meeting in the middle. The construction in our downtown will occur on Tuesday and Wednesday and this upcoming week. And then as soon as all of the conduit and the vaults are placed, restoration will come through and the fiber will be pulled. And it's just really exciting to just to see everything in action. Next slide. Well, I should have waited for all of that for this. So let me just reiterate how helpful CDT team has been and the Caltrans team, we meet on a regular basis once a week to just kind of discuss the next work for the next week, any issues that have come up. And it's been a really solid team. We have a lot of rain up here. We have a lot of cultural resources up here. It's not an easy place to work and I think that everybody's really, really working together to make it a successful experience. Next slide. All right, little bit more about our project, which I just it's so exciting. We're building a underground fiber distribution system that's going to offer 1 to 10 gigabytes per second connectivity to all homes, business, public safety locations, everybody, every premise in city limits. The network is using a centralized data Hut and that's equipped with all the core routing and firewall and maintenance switches. The OLT equipment, this data center will connect to 15 distribution areas. Currently, we have completed the underground drilling on 13 of the 15 distribution areas and we're looking to have the entire project wrapped up in advance of our June 31st FFA deadline. In fact, we've already requested 2 reimbursements through FFA and we're ready to do our 60% reimbursement through FFA. So this is just an extremely exciting project. Next slide. Exciting is one word, disruptive is another word. Doing underground utilities in a community that doesn't even have our existing utilities mapped out in any comprehensive way has been challenging. And the community has really been patient. We've hit a lot of sewer laterals, and we've had a lot of repairs and it's just a really big project and we've all got to be agile and flexible. This is an exciting picture for us. On the top there is our data Hut being lifted into place. Right below that we have the truck with our fiber spools on it and then some action shots with conduit being staged out in the field in a picture of one of our alleys being drilled up. Next slide, please. This is very exciting news. So the city acquired an Internet service provider that was part of our goal. We have a really unique situation where we have an Internet service provider that's been run out of the school district for the past 30 years and they've done a tremendous job connecting the coast. You know, we here in Fort Bragg are 7000 people, but we are also the commercial hub for the greater coast, which encompasses about 20,000. This business uses fixed wireless, old copper infrastructure and their technology is aging out, and we didn't want to put them out of business. We want to keep the expertise local.

And so we worked with the school district to actually acquire Mendocino Community Network and have brought on 10 new employees and hired a new broadband utility director, Sage Stateham. So we are well on our way. Next slide, please. And just to shout out all the things that you were talking about in the very beginning about why this is important for equity. Being a public utility is what's really exciting is that we're not just looking at how we can build this infrastructure, but we're already looking forward into how we can ensure that our community can access it effectively. We're working with our senior centers, our healthcare centers, our schools to really identify opportunities to provide trainings, resources to our community. And there's going to be a lot more exciting things to come that I can't wait to tell you about. And next slide, the end of the day, this is a huge lift. I know you all have thanked everybody, but we just want to thank you as well. Thank you. We appreciate all the work you're doing in your leadership. It has, it has been a very stressful but rewarding project. With that, I will close.

Monica Hernandez: Thank you so much, Sarah. We appreciate the partnership. We're excited for the transformational investment for your community and statewide. Chair, I'll turn it back to you to moderate any questions from members.

The Chair: Thank you. Miss. Hernandez, any questions? All right. President Reynolds.

President Reynolds: Thank you so much for the presentation, Monica. And I really wanted to direct my comments to Sarah at the City of Fort Bragg and just congratulate her and the team at the city for all of the work that they've done. I remember when the CPUC issued the technical assistance grant in the beginning when they were designing their project, coming up with the idea, and then they implemented that and came forward with a fantastic FFA project proposal. And we were able to award a grant to them at that time. And just, I'm so pleased to hear the report on all the work that has been done since then. And just looking forward to continued collaboration with the CDT team, our staff at the PUC and the City of Fort Bragg. So I appreciate hearing the update. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, President Reynolds. Any other comments from any members? All right, I don't see any. So I'm going to turn it back over to Hernandez to do another introduction.

Monica Hernandez: Thank you, Chair Bailey-Crimmins. And next, again, best part of my presentation, I get to turn it over to Chairman Steven Orihuela with the Bishop Paiute Tribe, another one of our partnerships. Thank you so much for being here.

Chairman Steven Orihuela: Thank you for having me here today, this morning. (Speaking Numu language). I just said hello. My name is Steven, I come from Bishop, CA. Thank you for allowing me to be here again. Thank you to Shannon and Mark for queuing up the Digital 395 and the Bishop Paiute Tribe. Next slide please. As was explained, a Bishop Paiute Tribe is in a very remote region of the state of California. We're on the eastern side of the mountain range. Go ahead. Next slide please. As you can see, we're about 5 miles away from the connection point, which is a very important connection point for the Bishop Paiute Tribe. The current connection is publicly funded but privately owned, so it requires bottom line coordination between tribes, local jurisdictions and private owners. This project is very important because before talking about some of the programs and the cases that we have, it's important to start with the foundation itself, what broadband represents for our tribal community and tribal communities at an infrastructure level. For our tribal community, broadband isn't a luxury, it's a core infrastructure component just like roads, water and electricity. Reliable broadband is essential for full participation in today's economy and society. Tribal ownership and control of broadband networks are especially important because they strengthen our sovereignty and ensure that decisions are made locally based on community priorities rather than outside interests. Yet tribal communities remain among the most underserved areas in the country when it comes to broadband. This gap, especially where we're at being in a rural location, reinforces existing inequities and limits economic, educational and health outcomes. As what was mentioned earlier, at its core, broadband is foundational to access to opportunity in this modern day era. When infrastructure gaps exist, especially for tribal communities, or when tribes lack ownership or control, the impacts aren't abstract. They show up very clearly in people's daily lives and in the local economy. Reliable Internet directly supports our tribal enterprises and all tribal enterprises, every small business out there, artisans, artists, entrepreneurs, by expanding access to regional, national, even global markets. At times, broadband also attracts investors investment. Enables remote work and helps keep economic activity going and also keeping good paying jobs here within tribal communities rather than forcing residents to leave to find opportunity elsewhere off reservation. It also helps the access to online training, certification programs, higher education avenues supporting lifelong learners and workforce development. And in the healthcare realm, broadband enables telehealth significantly reduces long travel times for medical services that we see in Bishop, which is especially critical for tribal elders and individuals with mobility challenges. Being in a remote location. The nearest major hospital is 3 1/2 hours away, 4 hours away. So if anything critical that happens in our local neighborhood and our small health clinic cannot handle it you got to fly or you got to drive and a lot of times there's, there's insurance complications. So it does help limit that divide

there. When you take a step back and look at these impacts together, whether they're economic, educational, or health related, it becomes clear that broadband touches every aspect of the community communities wellbeing. Overall tribal broadband isn't just an investment in technology, it's an investment in our people, economic resilience, tribal sovereignty, and the long term future of tribal nations. From a middle mile perspective, this work only succeeds when tribes are meaningfully included in planning, access and coordination. For many tribal communities, the middle mile may be physically close but operationally out of touch or out of reach due to ownership structures, access terms, and gaps in coordination among the jurisdictions. Ensuring that middle mile infrastructure is accessible, interoperable, and supportive of last mile tribal networks requires coordination between tribes, counties and the state, and private providers must be grounded in respect for tribal sovereignty and long term sustainability. When tribes succeed, surrounding communities succeed as well. Tribal broadband investments strengthen regional economies, improve service delivery, expand workforce participation, and create shared benefits that extend beyond the boundaries of the reservation. When middle mile investments are designed with tribes as partners, not an afterthought, they become true enablers of connectivity, self-determination and shared statewide outcomes. And I just wanted to wrap this up by saying the Bishop Paiute Tribe was the recipient of a National Telecommunications and Information Administration, the NTIA grant, which is going to help finish up the last mile project. And that leads into fiber to the home project for the Bishop Paiute Tribe. And we could see speeds up to 200 times faster than what we have now, which is really going to help our local economy and help our youth get schooling, what they need, help our elders, telehealth, and then ultimately transform what we have now into a tribal Internet service provider, which is going to greatly benefit the Bishop Paiute Tribe. And then in the hopes of broadening that prospect off reservation to help the rural economy of Bishop in Inyo County. And then with that, my closing thought, thank you for having me here again. And, Manahobu, thank you.

Monica Hernandez: Thank you so much, Chairman. Madam Chair, I'm going to turn it back to you to moderate any questions we might have.

The Chair: Great, thank you. And again honored Chairman Orihuela to have you again here. And just all the great progress it does take a true partnership and having the shared core values when it comes to inclusion and diversity and just bringing technology to rural parts of California that sometimes get overlooked. So important. So thank you. I would love to open it up to any members that would like to make comments or have questions for the Chairman. I do see President Reynolds.

President Reynolds: I just wanted to add my appreciation for your presence here today. Really appreciate having you here and it's just an honor to hear your remarks. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, President Reynolds. Any other questions or comments for the Chairman? All right, I don't see any but thank you very much. Pleasure. All right, we're going to go ahead and shift to the next agenda item, which is Caltrans update. We have Elias Karam and we have Aung Maung, who will be giving the update on where we are in the great partnership we have with Caltrans. Turn it over to Elias.

Elias Karam: Thank you. Good morning, Chair Bailey-Crimmins, committee members and others from the public. My name is Elias Karam, Program Director for the Middle Mile Broadband initiative at Caltrans. Thank you for this opportunity to share an update on the progress Caltrans is making to support the statewide Middle Mile broadband network. Next slide, please. In collaboration with the Caltrans Division of Traffic Operations, we will provide an update on two key areas of Caltrans responsibility, the Caltrans build and the issuance of encroachment permits for the CDT partner builds. Next slide, please. We will first be providing a status on the Caltrans build, which includes 2 main components, the design and construction of 300 miles of middle mile fiber infrastructure along the state highway right away and the design of 107 network hubs. Next slide please. This slide illustrates the scope of the Caltrans build in which we are responsible for the delivery of 305 miles of middle mile fiber infrastructure. As was shared at our October 2025 MMAC, all of the 305 miles have successfully completed preconstruction activities and are now ready for construction. Specifically, 178 miles are currently under active construction, 7 miles are being explored as dig smart opportunities, and 120 miles have already been fully constructed. We are on track to complete construction for all Caltrans miles by the end of 2026. Next slide please. Along with the fiber construction, Caltrans is also responsible for designing the network hubs. As this slide demonstrates, the current status of the 107 network hubs is as follows. All hubs have completed preliminary design, 101 hubs have completed design and are ready for construction by CDT and six hubs are actively in the design phase and are expected to be complete by spring of 2026. Next slide, please. At this time, I'd like to turn the presentation over to my colleague who will provide an update on the status of the CDT partner encroachment permits.

Aung Maung: Thank you, Elias. Good morning, Chair Bailey-Crimmins, committee members and others from the public. My name is Aung Maung. I'm Caltrans, MMBM Joint Bill Permit liaison with the Division of Traffic Operations, which includes issuance of encroachment permits. Next slide, please. I'll be providing an update on the status of partner bills encroachment permits today. Next slide please. To start, I would like to provide a high level summary of MMBN

encroachment permits as Caltrans collaborates with CDT on partner bills. CDT anticipates 3,337 miles of middle mile broadband network to be installed on the state right of way. As of January 13, we have received encroachment permit applications for 2,878 miles. In addition, we have received preliminary applications for 445 miles. These preliminary submittals include only general private project information such as county route mileage for the anticipated application. They had not yet been formally submitted. The different stages of anticipated and submitted permits are shown in a horizontal sequence across the slide. Of the 2,878 miles submitted applications Caltrans has issued encroachment permits for 1,045 miles as shown on the right side of the slide. Caltrans District teams are actively assisting CDT partners to complete design and environmental studies for the remaining 1833 miles of permit currently in intake, screening and functional review stages. This coordinated effort is critical to ensure Caltrans has the completed documentation to review and approve and subsequently able to issue inclusion permits. The numbers and the data presented today are from Caltrans encroachment permit system also refers to as SAPS. Next slide please. This slide represent encroachment permit miles and the status. Give me one second. This chart show month by month progress of MMBM encroachment permits since December 2024. Going from left to right, each bar represent a cumulative miles at the different stages of inclusion permit process. Dark blue on the top are the miles that issue for inclusion permits. Inclusion permits been issued light blue and the yellow are the miles for which work is underway by CDD partners supported by Caltrans to complete design and environmental even wave for the inclusion permit approvals. Light pink, the one in the bottom of the models noted in the preliminary applications. I like to note the positive trajectory from July of 2025 onward as I noted earlier, reflecting significant efforts of Caltrans and CDT teams, including Co facilitating the monthly discovery workshops to proactively address CDT partners concern, clarify requirements and the guidelines and maintain an alignment. In addition holding weekly check ins permit intensive meetings that bring CDT partners, CDT and Caltrans together to track progress, resolve issue and provide support and information to help our partners accelerate the deliverables. Next slide, please. This slide presents encroachment permit miles and the status by our CDT partner. Focusing the chart on the right side of the slide, the partners are listed alphabetically, and the horizontal bar represents the distribution of mile across the permit process. Consistent with the stages shown on the previous slides. They are the permanent same category. Preliminary application shown in light pink. Application in progress in yellow and light blue. Issue encroaching permits in the dark blue, next slide please. This slide using the same layout presents the number of encroaching permit applications by a partner. For the miles presented in the previous slide, I would like to highlight that of the 683 encroachment permit received as shown on in the bottom left, Caltrans have issued 354 permits. That is about 52% of the encroachment permits that we receive. Some of these permits cover small, localized location rather than the

continuous segment for work, such as crossing the highway connecting to the other network segment outside of the state right of way. You know these permits might have minimum or no mileage associated with them, but they do help CDT partners establish the essential connection necessary for building up the network. Next slide please. This chart shows inclusion permit Caltrans issue each of the previous three years to support the delivery of Middle Mile Broadband network. Caltrans is committed to assisting CDT partners completing the application. We are committed to expediting the issuance of the inclusion permits and supporting the successful delivery of the MMBM network. With this, this concludes Caltrans update. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Karam and Mr. Maung excellent progress and I'd love to open it up to any members that have any comments or questions. I see none in the room, but I do see assembly member Boerner online. Assembly Member, we cannot hear you if you speak anytime you'd like. Still unable to hear you. We will come back and make sure. We'll come back to you Assembly Member Boerner when the technical difficulties have been resolved, OK. Any other members that would like to speak regarding Caltrans update? All right, I see none, Thank you very much. But we will give Assembly member Boerner an opportunity once she is able to get back online with her audio. All right, with that we're going to go ahead and shift to a Golden State net, our third party administrator and their CEO, Erik Hunsinger.

Erik Hunsinger: Thank you, Madam Chair. Next slide, please. I want to do a quick review of the TPA responsibilities. We've been managing this now for four years working on the program with CDT. We've brought to the table a really concentrated commercial perspective to give CDT a lens on what the best practices are in the telecommunications sector. And so we lend that oversight to ensure that the ADM partners are meeting the goals of SB156 through any means possible. Just as a reminder, one of those items was mid span interconnects to reduce cost of construction for last mile partners. So oversight with that specific lens really ensures CDT success. In addition to that, we've been given responsibility for some of the things that operators aren't really tuned to do regarding the HUT management, there's a parts and pieces there that are somewhat in aim but are necessary to ensure the viability of the network and make sure that the electronics and the network is running effectively. We also have responsibility for business development and at that moment we're in the pre-sales phase and we've done quite a bit of work to generate interest in the network. Of course that leads directly to sustainability for the network because of that closeness to the potential customer base. We're keenly aware of the need for network expansion in response to those demands by customers that could include bringing points of presence onto the network that are in demand or extending to new partners as they're ready to get onto the network. Next slide, please. As Mr. Martin-Guzman had noted, we

were responsible for all the hubs that are not on Caltrans right away. At the moment, we don't have anything that's in 100% completion yet. So we're not ready to build, but we're very close. Most of the 20 out of the 21 hubs are have a lease in place. Fire Marshall has been engaged and approved all of the plans. Power is designed to all the sites, but we still are working on air quality approvals and site readiness. Next slide please. So as I mentioned earlier, we've been in an effort to generate interest in the network. And so we, we actually started that two years ago, but it's been formalized with partnership of CDT just to ensure that we're pursuing and aligning our goals to create sustainability. We have at the moment about just shy of 30 opportunities quoted out to the marketplace. And I want to emphasize these are not related to the FFA awardees, these are commercial quotes that we've given. So carriers, Internet providers, some of them are interested in last mile infrastructure, some of them are interested in point to point connectivity for their own businesses. But we have roughly 310 million in opportunities quoted out to the marketplace. We believe that three entities are, even though the network isn't complete, are interested in maybe signing a contract with CDT this this year potentially by second quarter. So we're kicking off connectivity and there's strong interest in what the state of California has developed. And that concludes my presentation, I believe.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hunsinger. I would like to open it up to anybody that has questions. I see none in the room. See if anybody online. Yes, Assembly member Boerner.

Assembly Member Boerner: Can you hear me?

The Chair: I can.

Assembly Member Boerner: OK, well, let's see if this works. That's not how I prefer to do it. For the TPA. One of the things that I have spoken with you about and you know, I'm concerned about is how the governance structure is going to work. So could you provide the committee work on an organizational chart and workflow matrix to determine how the relationship between the three parties is intended to work? What's in law, what would be in the terms of agreement, and what may be is open to discussion because I want to make sure we get the governance structure correct. We're going to use a three entity arrangement. Zoom is not responding. Oh my God, can you hear me?

The Chair: Yes, thank you. Assemblymember, we are bringing up the relationship slide in between Mr. Hunsinger, who's obviously in the blue box. If Mark, you could reiterate the relationship and answer the question that assembly member Boerner asked.

Assembly Member Boerner: Yeah, I don't see the slide.

The Chair: Oh, you don't see? I think the other.

Assembly Member Boerner: I'm sorry, we're having technical difficulties. You know, it's great for technological update, but it's not working. Nothing here is working. So yeah. But yeah, if you, I don't know if you can, I don't know how to see the slide. I see myself right now, I see MMAC chambers, but I don't see anything else and I can't scroll.

The Chair: OK, we can describe what is on the slide. Yeah. Oh, pardon. Monica.

Monica Hernandez: Apologies for interrupting. I can very quickly get online and e-mail this slide to.

Assembly Member Boerner: I can't look on my computer and be on this. I'm sorry. It's like ridiculous. This shouldn't happen, but this is what's happening.

Secretary Maduros: So can I also just make one suggestion? I think it definitely worth going through the slide, but it may also be helpful to provide the assembly member with even a more detailed structure and to have a more detailed layout of what may be done by contract, if there's anything that needs to be done through the state. Because while I think this is super helpful, it may not provide the level of detail to answer her question as I understand it.

The Chair: So, it sounds like an action item for us to provide a deeper dive. Assembly Member Boerner, do you still want us to at least at a high level, talk through the relationship as we set up a separate meeting to have?

Assembly Member Boerner: Oh, I see the slide now. I see the slide. Yeah, that's fine. I see the slide. You don't have to talk through it. I understand SB156 outlined very clear relationships between CDT and the TPA and we're now adding a layer of complexity, and I have some questions about that to go back to, but we're adding a layer of complexity. So the detail that I'd like to see is what is it codified through SB156, which is state law so people can't violate state law. What is codified through their terms and conditions and how TPA and the operator are supposed to work together because basically CDT is contracting with both of them and there's no arrangement between the TPA and the operator. So that's the governance structure that could go awry. And we want to prevent it from going awry right from the beginning. So that's what I'd like to see clarified for the next MMBI meeting. And my understanding is that the existing TPA didn't bid on the 1st RFP because CDT was requiring an upfront

cash payment which they didn't feel made business sense. My understanding is the second RFP did not have that requirement. So did the existing TPA bid on the second RFP?

The Chair: We're in active negotiations right now. I don't think we can talk about the solicitation specifically, but you do have the CEO of the third party administrator here in the room. I guess the question then is should we bring this back? I'm going to look at the member. Should we bring it back and not only have a separate meeting, but is all the membership interested in having a more detailed terms and conditions conversation? I want to make sure we're transparent. So is that the recommendation from the members.

President Reynolds: I wouldn't wait a whole quarter.

Secretary Maduro: Just do an outcome you can provide or written response. But we should also I think maybe then discuss some of this in the April meeting if there are concerns for with any of the members. But I also think with the GSN lead here. I mean, if there's an answer that can be provided, I don't think there's anything precluding him from discussing whether or not they've bid on the second. I mean, I'm not aware of.

Erik Hunsinger: We made the choice not to bid on the second round based on our collaboration with CDT and some of their expected requirements. We felt that they needed somebody tailored for operation that was already staffed completely to do some of this work. As a reminder, this entire effort has been evolving right from inception and funding to planning, which we were a key part of and then shaping how the network was deployed. But we are not staffed at this point with people on the ground. I mean, is there a potential that we could, yes. We'd have to grow into that relatively quickly. But you'd have to confer with CDT on what they have negotiated in their second round. I'm not part of those negotiations. So I'm not sure what they've been able to craft.

Secretary Maduro: Thank you for that. Can I just ask a follow up question, not related necessarily to this, but to your presentation in terms of the sales, which I really appreciate your sense work on that. Are you, which is obviously a vital part of starting to generate some revenue for this so that we can you know, it can become sustainable as quickly as possible. Are you seeing growth in demand? What sort of?

Erik Hunsinger: That's an interesting question. There's yeah for fiber, yes, there was a major shift a few years ago in how particularly hyperscalers manage their network. In the early 2010 or so, there was a lot of focus on equipment and electronics to meet a broadband connectivity. But hyperscalers have realized that they can do more effective connectivity with just fiber, right. So

they're throwing fiber at the problems, right. But they stand and the net result is they need large counts of fiber, actually more than the state has put in place. Now, I will say that there are some unique attributes to the state's network, the routes that have been prioritized and one in particular discussing this morning was the 101 routes. Nobody has that route right. So that is going to be of strong interest to many, many commercial entities. There was recently a subsea cable that was put in into Eureka and so there's a lot of diversity requirements needed, and the state is going to have something very unique there. In addition to that, many of the carriers are constantly looking for alternative paths. And while there are commercial partnerships that the state has created, many of those companies aren't selling their infrastructure to the commercial space. Like the feedback that I've gotten from some of these folks that I've quoted that have asked for these quotes on the slide is they can't get that infrastructure from the ADM partner that the state has, but they could get it from the state. So I do see an increase in growth. And interestingly enough, there's a number of companies that are moving into California that are actually interested in providing last mile connectivity as well. So they have the goals of SB156 already in their business model. And so they're interested in leveraging the state's infrastructure so they can meet their business goals. Is that hit some of what you wanted? Yeah. OK, thank you.

The Chair: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Hunsinger. So we have an action item based on the assemblymember. We're going to bring more detail about the terms and how the codified in law the relationship between CDT and its third party administrator and the operator. So we will do that for April and also look for the opportunity of sending something out sooner based on Michelle's recommendation. OK. Any other member comments or questions for Mr. Hunsinger? Right, I see none. So we're going to go ahead and get our final update.

Assembly Member Boerner: Sorry, Chair, can we go back to Caltrans now that I have a voice?

The Chair: Pardon assembly member Boerner. Oh, Caltrans. Oh, yes, we'll go back.

Assembly Member Boerner: Yes. Because of that presentation, my audio didn't work.

The Chair: Sure. Absolutely. So we will go back to Elias and Mr. Maung, if we could. Is there a specific slide or just that you want to go?

Assembly Member Boerner: We might want to move through the slides. As I ask the questions, I'm really concerned. Well, let me just go through the questions

since we've kind of jumped around. What work remains for federal approval and what are the timelines? I didn't really see in the stages of all the different projects, and this is for the for the partner build. I didn't really see how much work is outstanding because you know, I've always been very concerned about us finishing and the permitting delays and I've pretty much been very vocal about that for the past over a year. So what work remains for federal approval? Do we have a timeline for that and you describe what kind of work it is and who is completing it.

The Chair: OK, Elias, Are you ready to answer those questions? Is this the right slide that you want to speak to or you want a different slide?

Aung Maung: We can stay on this slide. As far as Caltrans to issue permit needing federal approvals are only for the permits that on the Interstate where we need encroachment policy exception approval. There are only about 20 or so permits

Assembly Member Boerner: And how many miles do those 20 or so permits cover?

Aung Maung: It is about 360 miles. However, for us to submit it to FHWA that package needs to have a complete design environmental which we kind of work with our CDT partners to get to that stage, right.

The Chair: I see two hands up. So I'll get them an order. Also we have Secretary Maduros and we then we have Chief Deputy Moore. So first Secretary.

Secretary Maduros: As I understand it and maybe it would be helpful for people listening. As I understand it though, for all of the right of way miles you're operating with federal delegation. So you do have federal rule, federal FHWA rules that you are required to abide by with some of the things that third party builders must submit. Can you maybe talk a little bit about that because they are federal requirements and you all are responsible for overseeing them in some of these instances that are off the Interstate as I understand it, but am I correct in that? Can you maybe talk a little bit about that?

Elias Karam: So just to clarify that a couple of things. Caltrans is responsible for NEPA compliance for I think miles that are on system when it comes to anything federal like federal Land Management agencies, those are separate approvals and Caltrans is not involved in that process and Caltrans issues encroaching permits without verifying that the partners, CDT partners have obtained their approvals from those entities. And so it's probably proper to turn to CDT to talk about how they engage with those federal partners and how they track those approvals with their partners.

Secretary Maduro: But in terms of the NEPA piece and the cultural resource piece, which I believe are federal requirements, I mean, I know you're working in this daily, but for those of us who are not, can you maybe explain how that works? Because as I understand it, they are federal requirements that you have the delegated authority to. But their federal requirements, not state sequel requirements, but still require a lot of work on the part of the third party builders.

Elias Karam: So when it comes to getting environmental encumbrances the Section 106 and Section 7, in most cases, almost all cases they use CE categorical exclusion for that approval. In a few cases they've required a higher level environmental document that takes a longer time. We had three of those total on the entire Caltrans build. So it very rarely occurs that a higher level environmental document is needed. But again, like when it comes to the federal partners, the partners work directly with the federal Land Management agencies without Caltrans involvement. They can access for assistance when they have issues or roadblocks they'd like to help work through. But those partners are responsible to work directly with those federal agencies.

Secretary Maduro: So those are like BLM and is that what you're talking about in those instances where you need to get BLM approval, for instance, to go through BLM land. But as I understand it from the builders, the environmental piece, even with the categorical exclusion and the cultural resource piece, it's not small. I as I listen to you, it sounds minimal. As I listen to the builders, it doesn't sound, I mean, it sounds like it's a substantial process to go through. I maybe we can hear from builders, but I'm just trying to align what I hear from you with what I hear from others.

Elias Karam: Yeah, I know. Thank you for this question. Secretary Maduro, I'd like to call back to what Chief Deputy Johnson said at the beginning. There are many stakeholders involved in these projects and permits are much larger than just Caltrans approvals. And so as he stated very well in the beginning, there's many entities that are impacted. They're all a different action and different approval and the partners are responsible for getting those approvals from all other state and federal agencies and in addition to Caltrans.

Secretary Maduro: But under the CE you have delegated authority. But as I understand it, even with the categorical exclusion you can't waive the NEPA and the cultural piece. Isn't that the part of what's occurring here?

Elias Karam: I'm not sure I'm following fully the question on this is, can you, maybe.

The Chair: Chief Deputy, do you want to. Mr. Moore, would you like to make a call?

Dave Moore: I think maybe to clarify, Elias, if you could provide and correct me if I'm wrong, but what you're basically saying is, is there's potentially 3 different touch points with different federal partners for the Caltrans side.

The touch points are if we have projects on the Interstate right away, we have requirements with Federal Highway Administration to get their permissions and approvals for those projects. In terms of the environmental NEPA regulations, we are delegated that authority to act on behalf of Federal Highway Administration to make sure that the environmental rules and laws are followed in the NEPA process, correct. And then the third part is on the partner builds. Our partners are working directly with different federal landowning agencies if they have projects on their land for the specific permits that they deem. So depending on the different touch points and the NEPA process is sometimes a difficult process, especially if you do have presence of sensitive biological species or presence of cultural sites. And that part is the responsibility of Caltrans.

The Chair: Thank you, Secretary, and thank you Chief Deputy. Assembly Member Boerner.

Assembly Member Boerner: Yeah. So I think this whole conversation illustrates maybe the challenge with this is that normally when we're saying we're providing assistance and we're going to help our partners build out this once in a generation infrastructure, there be some road map. If I can barely follow this and we're going back and forth on who's doing what when it's clear to me why there have been delays. And so maybe as we go through this and we start tracking, it seems like Caltrans has a direct responsibility. They have a delegated responsibility. And then there's other agencies. That's what I took away from that whole conversation. I only see part of somebody's head nodding. So I hope that's accurate. Secretary Maduros, that's who I see part of your head. So that's what I'm looking for. So, but when somebody's building in California, they know they have to do different levels of government. It's not like anybody doing these projects didn't know that. I think it is on our side to make it clear and easy and transparent, right? That is part of the things. And maybe it's one of the lessons we learned. So maybe the next question is what lessons have we learned from how to do this and implementing major projects across levels of government that we can take forward? Or is it something that we need an audit to like tell us where are the challenges? What needs to be streamlined so that large projects when they're building like this. I mean, we're talking about here about broadband, but you can think about this for transmission lines, you can think about this for other areas of the state that we would need some

coordination. It seems like there's still this challenge in coordination which is delaying the middle mile deployment.

The Chair: A question. Would it be helpful in April for the remaining miles to show because I know CDT tracks with our partners including Caltrans, what permits are needed for which sections because not everyone needs to deal with the Coastal Commission and others. Would that be helpful

Assembly Member Boerner: That would be really helpful to see. Because I think one thing is we want to expedite this without sacrificing proper review, right. Like I'm not advocating for sacrifice proper review. So expedite this so we meet our deadlines. But I really think it's important that we take these as lessons learned to see where is the friction for these things so that we don't replicate this again in a future either a broadband issue area or another issue area in our state, right. We want it to work for people when we're building infrastructure. We want it to work for the people building and we want it to work because ultimately when it works for the people building it, it should work for the people receiving broadband, right. Like you want that to work. So yes, that would be helpful. Thank you.

The Chair: Perfect. So status on where we are across each of those verticals and the lessons learned that we have crossed the network both would be valuable to the members sounds like. So thank you Assembly Member Boerner. All right, do I see any other questions or comments from any other members? All right. I see none. So I will go to the next agenda, which is Maria Ellis from the California Public Utilities Commission.

Maria Ellis: Good morning, committee members. Thank you for having me. Again, my name is Maria Ellis. I'm the Director for broadband Initiatives at the California Public Utilities Commission. Next slide, before we dive into CPUC's last mile programs and our update, I just want to take a moment to recognize the importance of the middle mile effort that we're all working towards and the importance of the Broadband for All initiative in general. The number of agencies and programs and organizations and individuals that have to come together to make this happen is mind boggling and it's really achievement and a milestone that we should be very proud of. On the right side, there are some key outcomes here that we believe at the California Public Utilities Commission that the Middle Mile Broadband Initiative will bring to the state. The MMBN is an important and transformational investment in California that will pay dividends for years to come. It's an important economic development initiative for the state of California. It's going to support affordable and reliable broadband networks to enable the improvements of public safety, workforce development, healthcare, education, and the economy in general. It's going to support rapidly growing technology demands like data centers and our own

data consumption as individuals in our homes and empower Californians now and for future generations. And the benefits of this infrastructure can be leveraged well into the future, now and well into the future. Currently, I'm going to talk about this as part of our last mile update, but we do have around 64 projects total in our last mile portfolio that have indicated they have an interest in and possibly connecting to the middle mile broadband initiative. I'm going to speak more about that later. But that is an indicator of the immense interest in my mind for these last mile providers to see the value proposition of an Open Access network. Of course, grantees will have to determine the locations of where they will interconnect, and they will need to sign up with CDT. But this partnership is working and CDT is providing as much as information as they can in coordination with grantees as possible along this process. CPUC is thrilled to be supporting this once in a lifetime investment that is going to enable high speed access for Californians. Excellent. And actually before we move on, these are a couple of groundbreakings for the Middle Mile that CPUC has had the opportunity to participate in partnership with CDT on. The one is from Sacramento and one from is from a project with Arcadia. Next slide, please. So a very familiar slide. Our mission here at the CPUC is to deliver programs that fund the deployment of safe, reliable and affordable broadband service across California, especially in communities that lack this essential service. This slide just takes a quick snapshot of some of the programs that we implement here at the CPUC, specifically several of those related to the SB156. I'm going to start off with I can certainly provide an update, will provide a deeper update, but I just want to flag we hit a huge milestone with a broadband equity access and deployment program since our last update, which is that we submitted a final proposal. I'll talk more about that later, but this is a \$1.86 billion program that is a federal program through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. Of course, we've got our California Advanced Services Fund, which is a state program and it's a suite of six different sub accounts that provide grants for a variety of things such as public housing, infrastructure, grant accounts, adoption and more. We've got our \$50 million loan loss reserve program which was awarded to a grantee Golden State Connect Authority. Not Golden State. I almost went to my colleague here at the table, GSCA. And then lastly our last mile federal funding account and which is almost \$2 billion program that is a multiyear funding program. So it is appropriate over years for making investments in last mile. Next. OK. I want to start in with talking a little bit about what we've been able to do with BEAD. So as you recall back in June of 2025, that was an excuse me for that June 2025 NTIA made substantial changes to this program and this came after two years of states across the country working on the rules outlined in the notice of funding opportunity that was issued by NTIA before this change came into play. So the state and as well as many other states had to shift to very rapidly to implement the new policy priorities outlined in this restructuring policy notice. This is now really called BEAD 2.0 and the California team worked really fast to

implement this new policy and open up new rounds of funding based on the new policy priorities from NTIA so that we could be able to bring this before the Commission for consideration in December. I'm really happy to report that the CPUC was able to achieve 100% coverage of all BEAD eligible locations, which is a monumental task. California actually ended up having more bead eligible locations by 10s of thousands, almost 100,000 more than any other state in the country and had a smaller proportionate allocation. When you're looking at those numbers, we reached more locations with less money. That's what that means in essence. And we maximize the state's allocation for the deployment of infrastructure to meet these locations. And we also maximized the deployment of priority projects, meaning those projects that according to the notice of funding opportunity and restructuring policy notice met the standards of what is qualified as priority project. So really proud of this work. This program is currently with. We have submitted our final proposal to the NTIA and the NTIA is reviewing our final proposal. All of the contents of the final proposal and including our proposed sub grants may be modified by the NTIA. And so we just want to note that that is something that we're watching carefully. But the good news is we've received feedback that our final proposal looks really, really good in terms of not needing as much curing as a lot of other states have received. So very proud of that. Next slide. OK. Moving on to the federal funding account, since our last update, I want to share that we have closed round two and made another series of awards in both in December and yesterday, the Commission awarded another set of projects. This round two, we received 72 applications from 21 entities requesting roughly \$600 million. And what we've been able to achieve with Round 2 is that we've been able to fund projects in all 58 counties of the state now. And Round 2 is really focused on those six counties that didn't receive an award the first go around. And so now we've been able to achieve a goal of at least some awards in each county. The federal funding account is like I said a multiyear funding program. It is a mix of both state and federal funds and where we hope to continue to make additional grant rounds pending appropriations. There's 550 million that is slated and has been penciled in in 27-28 budget. If that is able to materialize, we would hope to continue to invest and round out what is in essence would be a \$2,000,000 program at that time. Next slide please. And so I wanted to take a moment to talk about one of our success stories here, the City of Gustine in Merced. With the goal of funding these programs, we've been able to, this program has now completed this project in Gustine. It's 37 miles of buried conduit in the central office. It's going to benefit over 6500 Californians. And this is a population that is poised for growth and this project is going to be really phenomenal in terms of the impacts it's going to have for this community. I know that folks, I am the last thing that is standing between you and being able to get to lunch. But here, just wanted to let you know that we're here to answer questions. We're going to be able to highlight future stories of success as more projects are coming to completion. And we'll tell you we're very

envious of the great work the CDT does in terms of communication and telling those good stories. And we're really excited to be able to tell our own in 2026.

The Chair: Thank you. Miss Ellis, excellent update. I do see that Supervisor Alejo has a question.

Supervisor Alejo: Yes, thank you very much, Madam Chair and Miss Ellis. Thank you for the presentation. I represent Monterey County and we were one of the last six counties who had not received any funding, I think, from the FFA account. Could you elaborate on what was awarded? Because this is breaking news as of yesterday and I raised this with staff yesterday in our briefing. We were concerned because Monterey County, as you know was the home of those two little girls that were photographed by one of our county employees outside the Taco Bell in East Salinas. And our county was one of the first to compensate for a multi billion dollar bond that eventually became SB156. And we were one of the first counties to form a JPA specifically focused on disadvantaged communities in South Monterey County that is chaired by my colleague Supervisor Chris Lopez. But as of yesterday, we were informed that those disadvantaged communities were passed up despite getting a technical assistance grant for the JPA from the CPUC and submitting their application and being turned down twice. We were informed preliminarily and I hope to hear different from you that our county received a relatively small grant that was focused on expanding broadband to our cannabis nurseries to an affluent community or nearby, but that the disadvantaged communities in South County, many of those who were farm worker communities were passed up once again, I hope that is not true. But if you could elaborate on what was awarded to Monterey County, because it would go against everything that we've been talking about, about equity and extending broadband to disadvantaged communities, those who have been waiting for too long. I hope that the state and the CPUC did not pass up those communities once more.

Maria Ellis: Thank you for the question, Supervisor. The CPUC did make a grant in Monterey County to the California Broadband Alliance. And so part of how the CPUC evaluates applications is that we have a holistic review of technical, feasible market, and feasibility design, that's just to name a few. And then projects also go through an objection period. Where parties are able to object to an application for a variety of reasons. And those get evaluated and cross check to address whether an application wants some or partial objection, full or partial objection. Excuse me. So while we did make an investment in Monterey County, it might not be the application you're referring to. Unfortunately, I'm not able to speak to applications that are not approved in this setting. However, I do want to say that in addition to this federal funding account grant that the CPUC has made in Monterey, the CPUC has also made

two additional awards from the California Advanced Services Fund program, specifically the infrastructure grant account in Monterey County in these areas in recent years as well. So certainly it is an area where the CPUC is seeking to make investments in broadband.

Supervisor Alejo: Well, I would like to ask if I could do a follow up with you to get more details, because just for all this advisory committee and all the goals and everything the governor and the legislature has said. For me, it's a glaring example of the people that were supposed to be extending service and providing resources to, they are getting passed up. And for a grant to be awarded to cannabis nurseries over poor, disadvantaged, low income farm worker communities. It's really a glaring example of injustice and that we're not fulfilling what we said we were to the people of California. And I have to say, because we waited patiently for this grant, it's been passed up twice. We followed up multiple times about it. And to hear this news, it really leaves that sense of injustice for these communities. And it's hard to report back to our community that despite sitting on these advisory committees that the communities in our own backyard are still being ignored once again by the state. And I just wanted to put that on record. Thank you very much. And if I could follow up with you.

Maria Ellis: We'd be happy to follow up Supervisor, Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, supervisor for the question. Is there any other questions or comments from the dais? I see none. Any online members. I see attendees already starting to put their hands up, but we'll make sure we're dealing with that in the public comment. Any questions from members? OK, I don't see any. So we're going to go ahead and move on to the last agenda item which is public comment. Miss Alvarado, if you please, provide the public comment guidelines and then begin that process.

Alicia Alvarado: Thank you, Madam Chair. In order to ensure everyone who wishes to make public comment has the opportunity to do so, we respectfully request one person per entity and two minutes per person. The order of public comment will be online public comment submissions prior to meeting Zoom hands raised and phone hands raised via Star 9. We have not received any e-mailed comment submissions prior to our meeting, so we will start with the public comments in the room and then via Zoom. Not seeing any public comment in the room, we will go to online comments. Tracy Rhine with RCRC, please unmute yourself.

Tracy Rhine: Thank you. Good morning, members. Tracy Rhine with Rural County Representatives of California. First, I'd like to commend the Middle Mile implementation team for their hard work with our team on the details of our bills

to ensure that all the same places are being talked about and when that switch does get turned on, that the last Mile can provide the service to the end user. They have been very collaborative, and we very much appreciate that. We also appreciate the efforts by leadership to community keep the lines of communication open with us, especially as an FFA awardee. But we do want to take this opportunity before this body to reiterate the importance of ensuring that not only prioritizing middle mile network segments that enable FFA awardees to complete those state funded projects in those largely unserved areas, but also to take into consideration the use and affordability of that middle mile network or that end user network. And that those projects that are serving disadvantaged communities or are in collaboration with municipal partners, CBO's or other non-incumbent ISP partnerships are affordable for those network providers. Thank you.

Alicia Alvarado: Thank you Miss Rhine. Next we will go to Patrick Messac.

Patrick Messac: Thank you members of the council. I want to express the City of Oakland's gratitude for CDT and Caltrans solutions oriented partnership. We are moving forward in lockstep to actualize these transformative investments and translate them into 21st century access. For Oakland this network is not nice to have infrastructure. It's foundational to the success of Oakland Connect and our ability to deliver affordable, reliable connectivity to 10s of thousands of households who have been priced out of the market for too long. As we've explored access to other private market Open Access infrastructure, we found costs that are alarmingly prohibitive and in practice undermine the very competition and public benefit these systems are meant to enable. That experience reinforces how critical it is that the Middle Mile remain a true public good, priced and governed to maximize downstream impact. And with the leadership of this Council and in deep partnership, we have full faith that those commitments can be actualized. We deeply value our partnership with the state and the Council. I look forward to continued collaboration to ensure this historic investment delivers public goods for public benefit. Thanks again and looking forward to ongoing success.

Alicia Alvarado: Thank you, Mr. Messac. Next we have Ben Hewlett. Please unmute yourself.

Ben Hewlett: Yeah, my name is Ben Hewlett. We're with the Last Mile FFA 4D for four grants and I just want to make a comment on the importance of streamlining the permit process to meet our deadlines. Us even at the last mile section of this state project, we're seeing significant delays in permitting, which is totally delaying our project and ability to move ahead. And we're a little bit concerned about meeting the 2026 deadline. And as an example of that, we have encroachment permits into Caltrans simply for traffic control that are

requiring cultural archaeological studies for simply momentary traffic control and that has delayed our permit since June. We're now backed up in our construction scheduling. I just would like to provide that feedback and suggest to CDT that they focus on streamlining the permitting process with Caltrans and the other agencies as much as possible and I think that's extremely important. I've also been told by Caltrans that last mile permits to Caltrans are in second position with middle mile and I understand that.

However, if it's delaying the last mile, that's an important piece as well. So I just wanted to enter in that comment and that I want to register our experience in the permitting process and the concerns that it raises in meeting the deadlines. Thank you.

Alicia Alvarado: Thank you, Mr. Hewlett. Next we have Lindsey Skolnick. Please unmute yourself.

Lindsey Skolnick: Good morning, members of the committee. My name is Lindsey Skolnick. I am here speaking on behalf of the California Alliance for Digital Equity, also known as CADE. First, I'd like to thank CDT for continuing to host the MMAC meetings as we kick off 2026. These meetings as well as the stakeholder briefings offer digital equity stakeholders and members of the public a valuable space to weigh in on the MMBI's progress. And we feel maintaining a two way channel of communication is critical as MMBI development continues. Well, it's unfortunate to hear the MMBI construction will not be completed by the end of the year. We greatly appreciate CDTs candor about the delays and the agency's commitment to working with the CPUC to ensure all FFA projects planning to connect to the MMBI stay on track. Many FFA projects are tied to tight development time according to their grant requirements, and therefore, it is essential the state prioritizes completing construction on the MMBI segments connecting to those projects. Further, in the spirit of maintaining transparency, once CDT knows which segments will be completed this year, we encourage you all to share that information with stakeholders and the public. So many of us are eager to see this historic project advance and soon get to the finish line as we know the network will have a lasting positive impact on bridging the digital divide across California. Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Alicia Alvarado: Thank you, Miss Skolnick. See no one else in the room with public comment. Back to you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Miss Alvarado. As we're in closing, I just always love to open it up to committee members. A lot was discussed today. Any questions, comments at the dais first, thank you for your continued partnership. We can't do it unless we're all in sync. So I appreciate all of our hard work. I also want to give an opportunity for members that are online. Thank you for all the questions

that you did make along the way. We're going to go ahead at this point and just thank again the committee members, the presenters, the attendees, both in the room and online for all your contributions today. Our next meeting is Friday, April 17th, 2026, from 10:00 AM till 12:00 PM. And with that, we will call the January 16th, 2026, Middle Mile Advisory Committee adjourn.