

California Broadband Council Meeting

July 24, 2026

9:30 a.m. – 11:20 a.m.

Meeting Recap and Transcript

In accordance with GC 11123.5, the California Broadband Council (CBC) continued to conduct hybrid teleconference meetings and provide a physical meeting location for the public to view and participate in CBC meetings.

The CBC met on Friday, July 24, 2026 at 9:30 a.m. in the Board Chambers at the Sacramento County Administration Center at 700 H St. in Sacramento. Members of the public, presenters, and ex-officio members had the option to join in person or via virtual conference.

Housekeeping & Roll Call

A quorum was established for the meeting.

Name	Organization	Member / Designee	Present	Absent
Chair Director Chris Given	California Department of Technology	Member	X	
Commissioner Darcie Houck	California Public Utilities Commission	Designee	X	
Deputy Director Steve Yarbrough	California Office of Emergency Services	Designee	X	
Deputy Superintendent Mary Nicely	California Department of Education	Designee	X	
Chief Deputy Director Jason Kenney	Department of General Services	Designee	X	
Undersecretary James Hacker	California State Transportation Agency	Designee	Online, X	

President and CEO Sunne McPeak	California Emerging Technology Fund	Member	X	
Deputy Secretary Michael Flores	Department of Food and Agriculture	Designee	X	
Program Manager Josh Chisom	California State Library, Broadband Opportunities	Designee	<i>Online,</i> X	
Secretary Christina Snider-Ashtari	Office of Tribal Affairs	Member	X	
Senator Josh Becker/Ms. Sarah Smith	CA State Senate Energy, Utilities, and Communications Committee	Member/ Designee		X
Assemblymember Mike A. Gipson or designee	Assemblymember Mike A. Gipson CA State Assembly	Member/ Designee		X

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome

Chair and Director of the California Department of Technology (CDT) Chris Given welcomed Council members and attendees and provided a brief overview of the CBC agenda. He also recognized the leadership of the Council and former State CIO Liana Bailey-Crimmins for their work in moving the Broadband for All initiative forward.

No CBC members made additional comments.

Agenda Item 2 – Executive Report

Deputy Director Scott Adams provided a high-level recap of various Broadband for All programs and initiatives, including the Broadband for All coordination, action plan implementation, member & community spotlights, and the State Digital Equity Plan's (SDEP) stakeholder & partner engagement efforts, tools and resources, and partnerships.

The following CBC member and presenter made additional comments:

- Ms. Sunne McPeak

- Deputy Director Scott Adams

Agenda Item 3 – Broadband for All Updates

Agenda Item 3.1 – Broadband for All Action Plan

Deputy Director Scott Adams noted that out of the 24 Broadband for All Action Plan Action Items, 5 action items continue to have ongoing and significant progress. These action items include #12, 14, 16, 18, and 21.

No CBC members made additional comments.

Agenda Item 3.2 – Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative

Deputy Director Mark Monroe of the Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative (MMBI) began his presentation by providing project and installation updates, including over 80% of the total plan network permitted, 50% of the total MMBN miles constructed, 53 huts in construction, and approximately 1,300 miles operational. The MMBI network operator, Skyline Technology Solutions, has been onboarded and began providing service in July. Mr. Monroe then reported on the completed and on-track project milestones. In coordination with CPUC's Federal Funding Account (FFA), Master Service Agreements (MSAs) have been executed to connect 9 FFA projects located in 8 different counties, allowing communities to begin connecting to the Middle-Mile Network. Next, Mr. Monroe highlighted CDT's partnership and ongoing collaboration with 5 tribal governments through joint build agreements and 3 tribal governments on hut placements on tribal land. He noted that CDT is working with more than 30 Tribes to develop plans to use the Middle-Mile Broadband Network. Lastly, Deputy Director Monroe provided the 2026 MMBI stakeholder engagement schedule. The virtual stakeholder engagement meetings will take place from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. on July 31 and October 30 for the remainder of 2026.

The following CBC members and presenters made additional comments:

- Ms. Sunne McPeak
- Undersecretary James Hacker

Agenda Item 3.3 – Last Mile Programs

Commissioner Darcie Houck from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) provided an overview of the Last-Mile Broadband Programs and Investments, including the FFA, Loan Loss Reserve Fund, California Advanced Services Fund (CASF), as well as the Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program. For her update on the BEAD Program, she shared

that the National Telecommunications Information Administration (NTIA) approved California's BEAD final proposal on July 17th and awarded \$1.86 billion to the state. Next, the Commissioner reported information on the CASF Infrastructure Grant Account. At the June 11 and July 2, 2026 voting meetings, the CPUC approved 8 infrastructure projects serving 7 counties for approximately \$68 million. At the July 16, 2026 voting meeting, the CPUC approved 6 infrastructure projects serving 7 counties for about \$74 million. Decision 25-11-003 authorized 3 new regional tribal consortia and expanded the scope to include the BEAD program. In June 2026, the CPUC approved Resolution T-17919 for 6 regional consortia for up to \$3.4 million in 16 counties. Commissioner Houck also shared a QR code for information on two upcoming workshops in Northern and Southern California. Then, Darcie reported that for the CASF Broadband Adoption Account, the CPUC received 154 applications in January 2026 and 150 applications in July 2026, bringing the total application amount this year to \$314 million. These grants provide resources, such as digital tools, training, and other opportunities that develop into long-standing benefits to the communities they serve. Finally, Commissioner Houck showcased a Last Mile Grantee Spotlight highlighting the City of Fort Bragg in Mendocino County with their total FFA award amount, miles installed thus far, and project outcomes.

For her FFA update, Commissioner Houck shared data on the 106 technical assistance grants awarded for 122 projects across California and a map of California highlighting the counties issued grants in Rounds 1 & 2. She showcased the Chumash Fiber Network in Santa Barbara County, which was awarded \$4.7 million to provide high-speed internet connections to around 300 locations, and reported their progress thus far. Next, Commissioner Houck provided a table addressing the status of various CASF accounts. She presented information on recent CASF grants in action by highlighting her experience and photos at the Nickerson Gardens site visit. Finally, Commissioner Houck reported on the April 22, 2026, CASF Annual Workshop and shared a QR code for the meeting recording.

The following CBC member made additional comments:

- Ms. Sunne McPeak
- Commissioner Darcie Houck

Agenda Item 3.4 – Adoption/Affordability

Robert Sansone of the CPUC provided an overview of the California Lifeline Home Broadband Pilot Program. The Home Broadband Pilot Program was designed to fill the gap created following the end of the Affordable

Connectivity Program. He shared a brief timeline since the program's launch date, minimum service standards, and specific support amounts for eligible Californians. Thus far, the Lifeline Program has received 19 advice letters, with 18 approved and 1 pending. Mr. Sansone then listed the 13 providers who have completed the onboarding process and have started enrolling subscribers. Next, Mr. Sansone shared with attendees the provider search tool that allows the public to search for providers by zip code as well as an example of search results by zip code. Lastly, Mr. Sansone shared tables and pie charts of the total enrollment applications approved by service tier, the broadband-related customer contacts by type, and the top 3 call reasons as of June 30, 2026.

The following CBC member and presenter made additional comments:

- Ms. Sunne McPeak
- Mr. Robert Sansone

Agenda Item 3.5 – State Digital Equity Plan

Ms. Anh Nguyen, Engagement & Operations Manager from CDT, provided updates on the SDEP. She began by reporting the topics, guest speakers, and attendance metrics for the monthly Digital Equity Communities of Practice this past quarter. Next, Ms. Nguyen reported that 249 organizations serving 949 resource locations, an increase of 15 organizations serving 73 new locations, have completed the enhanced Digital Equity Resource Finder since its launch. She also highlighted the Finder's new contributors and partnerships as well as provided a QR code for attendees to access the Digital Equity Resource Finder.

Next, Mr. James Spencer announced the establishment of the 7 Digital Inclusion Partnerships toward activities related to the SDEP. He concluded the SDEP presentation by sharing the schedule of upcoming Digital Equity Community of Practice meetings for the remainder of 2026, announcing the next Community of Practice meeting on July 30, and providing a QR code for the July Community of Practice registration link.

The following CBC members made additional comments:

- Deputy Superintendent Mary Nicely
- Mr. Josh Chisom
- Ms. Sunne McPeak

Agenda Item 4 – Member Spotlight

President and CEO of the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) Sunne McPeak presented the Member Spotlight on the Verizon Frontier Public Benefit

Agreements. She began her presentation with a final report on the Digital Inclusion and Small Business Listening Sessions that occurred throughout March and April. Ms. McPeak then proceeded to share the findings and action plans as a result of each listening session. Sunne concluded her presentation with CETF's public reporting and partner collaboration efforts thus far.

The following CBC members made additional comments:

- Deputy Director Scott Adams
- Ms. Sunne McPeak

Agenda Item 5 – Community Spotlight

Assistant Director Hayley Stone and Project Manager Lily McGlothern from North State Planning and Development Collective presented on “Building a Local Broadband Workforce in California's North State.” They began their presentation by sharing how their study connects broadband planning work with regional workforce needs to better support broadband development and long-term digital infrastructure across the region. They also provided regional context, stating that the North State covers 10 inland, rural counties in the NECC and UCC regions. Ms. McGlothern then shared the report's primary and secondary data sources and the North State's broadband workforce demand versus training supply. She reported the study's five key findings and recommended approach for each stakeholder group. Lily concluded by emphasizing that broadband and workforce development need to be coordinated in a practical way and providing a QR code to the full report.

The following CBC members made additional comments:

- Ms. Sunne McPeak
- Ms. Hayley Stone
- Commissioner Darcie Houck
- Deputy Superintendent Mary Nicely
- Ms. Lily McGlothern
- Secretary Christina Snider-Ashtari

Agenda Item 6 – Public Comment

Staff proceeded to address public comments, starting with in-person comments, then those with their hands raised on Zoom, and comments sent in via email prior to the meeting.

The following members of the public made a comment via Zoom:

- Patrick Messac, East Bay Broadband Consortium
- Lindsey Skolnik, California Alliance for Digital Equity (CADE)

No one made in-person comments and no public comments were received before the meeting in the CBC email inbox.

Agenda Item 7 – Closing

Director Chris Given thanked Council members, presenters, and attendees and noted the next meeting is Friday, October 23, 2026 at 9:30 a.m. at the Sacramento County Administration Center and online. The meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

(The recording and presentation slides from the meeting will be posted on the California Broadband Council's website.)

Transcript

Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the July 24th, 2026, California Broadband Council Meeting. Thank you to Council members, presenters, partners, and members of the public joining us today. I'm Chris Given, the State CIO and Director of the California Department of Technology, and it is my privilege to chair this Council. As this is my first California Broadband Council meeting, I want to begin by recognizing the leadership and work the Council and its member organizations have provided to move forward and coordinate the state's Broadband for All programs, which collectively aimed to close the state's digital divide and achieve digital equity throughout the state. This council has helped guide one of California's most significant, complex, multi-programmatic initiatives with a clear purpose. To ensure that all California residents have access. To high-performance broadband, affordable home internet service, and relevant devices. And the skills and training to enable digital inclusion. I also want to acknowledge the leadership that preceded today's meeting. Our former state CIO and Director Liana Bailey-Crimmins helped guide the Broadband for All initiative to this inflection point, while keeping the focus on people, service, and outcomes. I appreciate the hard work that has been done by CDT, our state and local partners, and this Council. Also, thank you to the Sacramento County Administration Center and their staff for supporting today's California Broadband Council meeting. We will now get started with roll call. Ms. Nguyen, I will start with roll call and review the meeting housekeeping items.

Good morning, Council members and members of the public. Please announce your presence as your name is called. Director Given from the California Department of Technology.

Present.

Commissioner Houck from the California Public Utilities Commission.

Here.

Deputy Director Yarbrough from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services.

Here.

Deputy Superintendent Nicely from the California Department of Education.

Here.

Chief Deputy Director Kenney from the Department of General Services.

Present.

Undersecretary Hacker from the California State Transportation Agency.
Present.

Ms. McPeak from the California Emerging Technology Fund.

Present.

Deputy Secretary Flores from the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

Here.

Mr. Chisom from the California State Library.

Present.

Secretary Snider-Ashtari from the Governor's Office of Tribal Affairs.

Present.

Senator Becker from the Senate, Assemblymember Gipson from the Assembly.
Director Given, we have quorum. Now, housekeeping items for Council members and members of the public. This meeting is being recorded. We will post a recording of this meeting, slides, and transcripts to the Broadband for All portal. Attendees, please note there is time allocated at the end of the meeting for public comments, either in person, via Zoom, phone, and read-through of public comments sent via emails submitted prior to the meeting. Presenters, please cue Amanda to advance your slides. Committee members, please use

the raise your hand feature on Zoom or raise your hand in person to notify Director Given to call on you to speak. Side-by-side speaker view when PowerPoint are shared is the best viewing experience. Closed captioning is available on Zoom. Hand raise on Zoom or star 9 if called in by phone. Director Given, we can begin.

Fantastic. Today's agenda will include some exciting implementation milestones that have occurred since our last meeting in April. Broadband Council meetings provide an opportunity to highlight how coordinated statewide initiatives and efforts are working together to achieve Broadband for All, close the digital divide, and foster digital equity throughout California. Today's agenda begins with an executive report by Deputy Director Scott Adams. The Broadband for All updates will include multiple sub-agenda items. Broadband for All Action Plan, the Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative, CPUC Last Mile Programs, Adoption/Affordability, and the State Digital Equity Plan. Today's member spotlight will feature President and CEO of California Emerging Technology Fund, Sunne McPeak, who will present on the CETF Verizon Public Benefits Agreement. For today's Community Spotlight, Hayley Stone and Lily McGlothorn from North State Planning and Development Collective will share the findings of Building a Broadband Workforce in the North State. Finally, as Ms. Nguyen alluded to earlier, there will be an opportunity for public comment. Would any Council members like to make a brief opening statement? Seeing none, first order of business, let's begin with the Executive Report. Deputy Director of the Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy, Mr. Adams.

Well, thank you, Chair and Director Givens. Thank you, Councilmembers and members of the public. I'm Scott Adams, Deputy Director of Broadband and Digital Literacy. Happy to provide an update. Before I do, I would just like to say congratulations, Director Givens on your first Broadband Council meeting. Glad to have your leadership here. If we could go to the next slide, please. So, real quick, folks, typically we give an executive report to update the Council on the work that CDT and the Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy have done since the last meeting. At a very high level, we've continued broadband parole coordination on many fronts, including having working sessions with a number of staff from Broadband Council member entities and other state agency partners. There's been significant ongoing work on action plan implementation, which you'll hear about in the next briefing. I'm very pleased to say that on the state digital equity plan, despite some hiccups last year with the elimination of the federal funding. There's been significant progress in terms of stakeholder and partner engagement, development in tools and resources to help support the ecosystem on their digital inclusion work, and then the leveraging and developing new partnerships to support the cause on digital equity. Additionally, we worked, you know, pretty hard to get you some variety on the

member and community spotlights, so hopefully you'll enjoy those. And that concludes my report. I'm happy to answer any questions.

Thank you, Mr. Adams. Do any of the Council members have any questions about Mr. Adams' update? Sunne? Go ahead.

Thank you, Director Given. Deputy Director Adams, so given where we are, oh, I should have that's a nice play on words, right? I get to use that's your name, in most sentences. So, just based on, and welcome, by the way. We're not supposed to bring the Gatorade in to dump on your head right now, I guess. Is that true?

Not yet.

Okay, I'm sorry. The progress that's been made so far, in the last year. What are the key milestones you want us to hit in the next five months in 2026?

So, milestones related to the plan. Our Broadband for All and Digital Equity Plan, what do we need to keep in mind that when you report in October did, we get it done, basically?

Got it. Well, I think across many fronts, I mean, that's in the Broadband for All updates, we'll see that. There's...

Oh, okay.

Yeah, there's still the tracking of the various action items, those that are done, that continue to live on, and those that are in the process of being completed. I think it's pretty clear that, from the perspective of the Middle-Mile, that, Deputy Director Monroe, through his update will kind of provide some clear categories for metrics to track between now and the next meeting. I believe similarly with Commissioner Houck and her last mile updates, as the, CPUC Lifeline Pilot Program continues to get its feet under them, You know, they will continue to present here on the, the progress that's being made on affordability and adoption, and then, there's some clear metrics we can talk about on the digital equity plan, once we get further into those.

So, let me make sure I'm understanding. So, we're still on item 2, and I'm just ahead of the agenda. You're about to go into the plan on item 3.

Absolutely, but it's a really great segue to the next

Okay, so I won't ask the question again, you can be thinking about it. I just wanted in my little head what I needed to get done.

Awesome.

Okay, thank you.

Thank you, Ms. McPeak. Are there any other questions?

Well, we'll turn things back to Deputy Director Scott Adams to begin the Broadband for All updates, starting with an update on the Broadband for All Action Plan.

Thank you very much, Chair. And again, we wanted to just, you know, set the table again before we get into the Broadband for All updates. When we established a new agenda format almost 5 years ago. Part of what we heard from folks is, how do all of these programs connect? How does the state action plan and/or the governor's executive order, the action plan, the Middle Mile, the Last Mile, how do they all connect? And so it was really from feedback from stakeholders and some of the council members that we said, yeah, we're gonna have one big agenda item on broadband for all, and you know, symbolically showed that all of these programs are required to work together, or they're interdependent in order to get to the goals of Broadband for All. So, wanted to set the table there that collectively the goals are to make sure that all Californians have access to high-performing broadband at home schools, libraries, and businesses, that they have access to affordable internet service and devices, and that they have the skills and training that they need for digital inclusion. Just like you said at the top of the thing here, but those won't get done without all of these different initiatives. So, first up, we can go to the next slide, please, is on the Broadband for All Action Plan. There are 24 specific items assigned to either single entities or multiple entities. What we wanted to share with you is just 5 action items where there's been, continues to be ongoing and significant progress. The first is on Action Item 12, which was assigned to the California Public Utilities Commission to improve the California Lifeline program. You will hear later about the great work that they're doing with their standalone broadband pilot, and the interest in how many of the Broadband Council members are collaborating with them to raise awareness of that program. Action item 14, which was really intended to leverage state contracting and procurement vehicles for the deployment of broadband and to support Broadband for all, continue to leverage those, very significantly, as Deputy Director Monroe will tell you about some significant procurement on the middle mile side, and on the our office side, on the digital equity side, there are some exciting new partnerships that were developed under very unique procurement vehicles. Action item 16 collectively, it's our job to promote and track enrollment and low-cost offers and subsidies. And so, with the Lifeline Pilot Program, you know, being implemented, that's something that the Broadband Council is now

taking upon itself to make sure we're supporting PUC and the community members to leverage in that program for affordability. Action Item 18, which was, again, our goal to the action plan's goal and our assignment to develop a multi-layer network of digital inclusion stakeholders throughout the state. We're pleased to say that after 5 years of collective work that, we now maintain a database of over 13,000 entities, individuals, county, city, government entities that are all, you know, committed to achieving Broadband for All here in California. And then I would say lastly is the action item 21 to highlight, which is the Broadband for All portal. As you members recall, the action plan designated or assigned CDT the task of creating a central repository of information, online for the Broadband for All program. So, the Broadband for All portal, though we all have websites that track our agency progress as, as we should. This serves as a digital storefront for Broadband for All, and we continue to expand and improve that. One example over the last three months is that as MMBI, the Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative, has expanded from a you know, construction and planning phase to more operational and sales component. We've worked with their team and our internal folks at CDT to transform their web presence to more of those for sales of customers on the network, or for the network. We've done a lot of other improvements that you'll hear about from staff on the digital equity plan portion. So, that concludes my update on action plan implementation.

Thank you, Deputy Director Adams. Do any Council members have questions regarding the Broadband action items? All right, seeing none, let's proceed to Middle Mile Broadband. Mark Monroe, Deputy Director of the Middle Mile Broadband Initiative, will highlight significant progress the MMBI team and the broader partners have made implementing this historic initiative. Mark?

Alright, thank you. Good morning, Chair and members. Again, Mark Monroe, Deputy Director for the Middle Mile Broadband Initiative here at CDT. As always, I appreciate the opportunity to provide an update to the Council on the progress for this important project. This morning, I'd like to highlight several important milestones that reflect the program's continued transition from network development into statewide operations. If we can go to the next slide. First, in terms of progress on the project, more than 80% of the statewide network has now been permitted, representing nearly 800 additional route miles permitted just since this last March. At the same time, statewide fiber construction now exceeds the halfway point, with another 336 miles of fiber completed over that same time period. And we're also seeing strong progress in the repeater huts that will enable network activation. Caltrans has completed its design work for the on-right-of-way huts, and construction is now underway on 53 hut sites statewide, including 36 that have broken ground just since April. While we're encouraged by this continued progress in building the network, the milestones that we've all really been working towards is CDT's ability to deliver

actual service to California communities. Since we last met, the Middle Mile Broadband Network has officially begun transitioning into operations. Skyline Technology Solutions has completed its onboarding as the network operator, and is now responsible for service activation, network monitoring, incident response, and maintenance coordination. Nearly 1,300 miles are now operational and available to support customer connections. I'm also pleased to report that CDT has executed its first master service agreements with FFA awardees. I'm now supporting 9 FFA projects that are expected to begin connecting to the network starting later this year, as construction on these FFA projects is completed. To us, these milestones really capture the progress of the program, and I wanted to take a moment to recognize the tremendous work of the MMBI and OBDL teams as well as our many other partners in reaching this point. Over the past 5 years, the MMBI team has built partnerships with FFA awardees, GSN as the third-party administrator. Skyline as a network operator, more than a dozen RFI Squared, development partners, tribal governments, and many others. They've negotiated and executed hundreds of agreements, developed the operational framework needed to support a statewide network, and position the MMBN to begin serving customers reaching this point has required tremendous initiative, creativity, collaboration, and sustained commitment. And I really want to thank each individual on CDT's team who has contributed to making all of this possible. We can jump to the next slide. Last January, CDT outlined several key objectives for 2026, and I'd like to provide a brief update on the progress we've made towards these commitments. The completed items on the left here illustrate just how much the program has evolved over the past several months. As I mentioned, Skyline has been onboarded as the network operator, and the first operational routes are now in service. Master Service Agreements are being executed, and communities can now begin connecting to the Middle-Mile Network. First, Skyline Technology Solutions has completed its onboarding and is now operating the network. Establishing statewide network operations was a foundational milestone because it allows CDT to begin delivering services as additional segments become available. Second, CDT has begun executing its first master service agreements with customers, such as FFA awardees. This marks the transition from customer planning and coordination to formal service relationships. Third, as noted, nearly 1,300 miles are now operational, including more than 800 additional miles, operational miles, since our April meeting. That represents one of the clearest indicators that the program has progressed beyond construction and into active service delivery. The items on the right reflect the work that continues to expand the network's operational footprint, and we're on track to achieve those objectives as well. Construction of the repeater huts continues to advance. Hut installation, utility coordination, and equipment deployment remain essential because, as we all know, these facilities transform installed fiber into actual service-ready infrastructure. We're also maintaining our current construction forecast. By the end of 2026, CDT expects approximately 5,300

route miles to be constructed, or about 65% of the statewide network. And approximately 4,300 miles, activated and available, to support customer connections, as last mile projects become ready for service. And finally, our coordination with travel governments and FFA awardees continues to move forward. Agreements are being executed to support future customer connections, and these partnerships remain central to fulfilling the objectives established in SB 156. Taken together, these milestones reflect a program that continues to build operational momentum. We can jump to the next slide. Alright. This update really illustrates the program's transition from network development into statewide operations. As I've previously shared, operational routes are now available for communities and providers to begin connecting to the MMBN. The green route shown here on the map reflects the operational network as of July 2026, while the gray routes identify the broader MMBN segments that remain under development. The operational route extends from San Jose to Los Angeles, east to Barstow, north through California's eastern corridor, with connectivity to a data center in Reno, and then continues back north, through Modoc County up to the Oregon border. This portion of the network is available to support customer connections now. Skyline Technology Solutions assumed responsibility for operating the network on July 6th. Their responsibilities include 24-7 network monitoring, maintenance, coordination, incidence response, and supporting customer service delivery across operational segments. This represents an important evolution of the program. While permitting and construction remain a significant focus, we'll now also be tracking operational performance and customer onboarding. California's Middle Mile Broadband Network is now open for business. I'm gonna jump, or actually, and consistent with this, CDT's The Customer Solutions team has continued working closely with the FFA grant recipients, planning to connect to the MMBN. As I've noted previously, 65 FFA Last Mile projects anticipate using the network to extend broadband service into unserved and underserved communities throughout the state. And our ongoing coordination is focused on understanding each project's deployment schedule and aligning these timelines with the availability of the Middle Mile Network. Since our last Broadband Council meeting, we've completed our Master Service Agreement, or MSA, for both dark fiber and lit service, and since late June, we've begun providing that agreement to interested FFA awardees that we're working with. As of today, CDT has executed agreements supporting 9 FFA projects located in 8 different counties. This marks another important milestone demonstrating the shared commitment between CDT and the FFA partners to expand broadband access throughout California. It also moves these projects from planning towards implementation as future MMBN customers. And over the coming weeks, we anticipate executing additional MSAs with FFA recipients and other customers, allowing service orders to be submitted to Skyline, so network services can be activated as those projects become construction-ready throughout the next year. Next slide, please. Next, I wanted to briefly update the Council on GSN's

ongoing sales and marketing efforts. GSN began this outreach effort approximately 6 months before CDT operationalized the first segment of the network along Digital 395. The goal has been to build awareness among potential customers as they develop their long-term strategies for bandwidth capacity, network resiliency, and geographic diversity. As shown here, GSN has developed a potential sales pipeline consisting of carriers, hyperscalers, enterprise customers, and anchor institutions that are evaluating long-term dark fiber and lit service needs. As we would expect, the pace of the network completion remains an important consideration as prospective customers evaluate when to enter into long-term service agreements with CDT. GSN reports that customer interest remains strong, and we expect additional opportunities to progress as more operational segments become available. But this pipeline also reflects meaningful market interest in California's statewide middle-mile network and the services it will provide. As CDT continues transitioning its network into operations, these discussions help inform our customer readiness, provisioning, and service planning activities so that we're prepared to onboard customers as additional segments become operational. As more of the network comes online, we expect many of these discussions to progress from customer interest to executive agreements, or to executed agreements, and ultimately to active network services. Next slide, please. And I also wanted to highlight, you know, at last week's MMAC meeting, Matt Rantanen and GSN's Vice President for Tribal Relations provided an update on CDT's ongoing collaboration with California tribes. Over the past several years, Matt has engaged in hundreds of conversations with tribal governments. To better understand how the MMBN can support their connectivity goals and broader broadband priorities. Shown here are five tribal governments partnering with CDT through joint build agreements as part of the MMBN. An approach that is believed to be the first. We believe to be the first of its kind in the nation. The Hoopa Valley Tribe was the first tribal government to construct Middle-Mile infrastructure on behalf of the state, establishing a model that was, that has created opportunities for additional tribal partnerships where project goals align. Since then, the Karuk tribe, the Yurok tribe, the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, and the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation have each partnered with CDT to construct portions of the network. And then in addition to, in addition, three other tribal governments are partnering with CDT by hosting critical repeater hut facilities on tribal lands. These locations strengthen the statewide network, while also supporting broadband opportunities within the tribal communities. The next slide. Right? You may also recall that one of the program's earliest milestones was connecting the first customer to the MMBN, and that customer was a tribal community, the Bishop Paiute tribe, was an outstanding partner throughout that effort and graciously hosted hundreds of attendees this past April as we celebrated the network's first operational connection. Looking ahead, more than 30 additional tribal governments are actively planning to connect to the state's Middle-Mile Network. And these partnerships directly support the activities

established in SB 156, which specifically identifies tribal communities as a priority for expanding broadband access throughout California. I'd also like to recognize Secretary Snider-Ashtari for her early guidance and engagement with CDT as we began working with tribal governments. The Secretary's advice helped shape our approach to building meaningful government-to-government relationships and identifying opportunities to partner in support of tribal broadband priorities. And lastly, if we can go to the next slide, someone will be tracking that CDT holds stakeholder engagement meetings every quarter. The next one is scheduled for next week, July 31st, so please reach out if you're interested in attending. I thank you, and that ends my update on the Middle-Mile Broadband Network project.

Thank you, Mr. Monroe. Do any council members have questions for Deputy Director Monroe? Ms. McPeak?

Thank you, Mr. Chair. And if Undersecretary Hacker is on, I do also have a question for him, although I can't. There he is, there's James, okay. But first, Mark, on the slide that has the map of California, what is the FFA project that is in the most northeast corner? I think it's Modoc County, what is that project? What is that FFA project?

It's a, yeah, if we can pull up the map. I believe it's a tribe up there, I'm sorry, I'm not... there's a tribal project up there, and I'm drawing a blank on the name of which one of the 65 that is.

Fort... it might be Fort... in the northeast. Okay, so there we are, and is the, the activated line, the Xyle line. On the Northeast, the one that is immediate in that coming north-south to the data center.

Yes.

It is.

And how... and there are huts installed, ready to access along that corridor?

Yes.

Okay. Alright. Thank you. And then the question to Undersecretary Hacker. I know you have been, particularly involved in, in really providing significant leadership in terms of, permitting in the Caltrans right-of-way, I just want to invite you to comment on the progress that you've been able to make, and, And then think about, particularly in October, what we would report as the keys to success there.

Yeah, I appreciate the question, and, you know, first, appreciate all the work that CDT has put in driving this project towards completion. You know, as I think we discussed, as we've discussed a couple of times here, you know, this is one of the largest, not just sort of broadband projects, one of the largest infrastructure projects in the country, period. And so, the leadership of CDT and the work of CDT and Caltrans and all of our joint builders has been really instrumental in getting us to this point. In terms of where we are on state right-of-way, I think Mark may have spoken to some of this, you know, but we've got roughly 3,000 miles of the network that are on state right-of-way. We've permitted more than 21 as of last week, I guess maybe 2 weeks back was when the last reporting period closed. So just before the last Middle-Mile Advisory Committee, we permitted just North of 2,100 miles of that. More than 1,000 of those permit miles were issued this year alone. So, permitting has certainly accelerated. Over the last 12 months. Which puts us in at least a decent place to get into a good spring towards the end of the year. You know, our goal on the state right away. Is to complete permitting of, as close to that full 3,100 miles as possible. And so, at this point, you know, we're ticking through sort of the outstanding, very large permits that we already have in progress. You know, we're doing sort of north of 150 miles a month. We expect that work to continue. As we get into October, you know, similar to other sort of infrastructure projects, frequently there's, the stuff that takes the longest is frequently the most difficult. And so, you know, we feel that we're in a pretty good place for the next couple of months, but there's going to be a fair amount of work to be done between Caltrans, CDT, and our joint build partners, who have also done a ton of work here, and have. Come a very long distance with us to get to the place where we have this sort of very structured and clean working sort of permit machine running. It's gonna take a lot of work to make sure that we can keep this current rate going, especially as we get into the end of the year, where we're tracking, you know, the last couple hundred miles of permits. Because once we get to that point, you know, it's stuff that was either added to the network or sort of shifted to a particular section of the project. Later in the process, we've had less time to work on those permits, or it's permits that are more complicated, permits that involve, you know, endangered species, or protected waterways, or things like that, that just naturally are more technically difficult to complete, and require more work to do so in, you know, sort of moral to do so in a responsible manner. But, you know, we're hopeful that we're gonna get there.

Thank you, Ms. McPeak. Are there any additional questions? Seeing none, we'll move from Middle-Mile to Last Mile. So, Commissioner Houck from the California Public Utilities Commission, CPUC, has many last mile grant programs that support Last Mile connectivity to homes and Broadband Adoption. She will share recent wins and significant progress the PUC has made this year. Commissioner Houck.

Thank you, Chair Given, and welcome and congratulations on your appointment as well. So today, I'm going to provide an update on our last mile programs associated with the multi-year broadband investments in Senate Bill 156 and other related PUC Last Mile efforts. So please go to the next slide. So, this slide provides a table regarding the programs that the California Public Utilities Commission offers. We have our Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program, and that is a \$42 billion federal program from the Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act that is being implemented by the National Telecommunications Information Administration, or NTIA, and California was awarded \$1.86 billion from this program. I am pleased to announce that NTIA did approve California's BEAD final proposal last week on July 17th, so that is great news, and we're very pleased to report that. And I'll be providing additional information about the program and the final approval when we get to the next slide. The next program listed here is our California Advanced Services Program, or CASF. This is one of the, CASF is one of the public purpose programs supported by the CPUC-approved surcharge on communications access lines. These programs are funded by a portion of the monthly flat rate of 90 cents collected from every active access line in California, and it consists of 6 programs that support a range of community broadband needs, from technical assistance to infrastructure, public housing, consortia, and broadband adoption. And I'll have several updates regarding that program a little bit later in the presentation, and then I want to move to our Broadband Loan Loss Reserve Program. This is a program that was authorized by SB 156, and it supports public entity bond financing for broadband projects. California's \$50 million broadband loan loss reserve fund expands the ability of local, nonprofit, and tribal governments to finance broadband projects with an emphasis on public broadband networks. The PUC recently approved Resolution T17925 on July 2nd. This resolution updates the guidelines to include a direct loan option, and it makes available the \$50 million in existing loan loss reserve funds as both direct loans and credit enhancements to eligible tribal governments, government agencies, joint powers authorities, and non-profit organizations working with governments. Additionally, the resolution authorized a streamlined and expedited process; to build bridge financing qualified last-mile broadband grantees, awards can now be approved administratively by our Commission's Communication Division staff in an effort to expedite getting funds out to get fiber in the ground. Last on the table is our federal funding account. This program supports reliable last-mile broadband infrastructure in every county of the state. The multi-year funding of approximately \$2 billion represents comprehensive one-time investments implementing the vision of broadband for all. The PUC held two rounds of applications and has awarded \$1.23 billion to date under the program. Future application rounds and grant awards of approximately \$550 million, which is the amount of the funds that remain from the overall \$2 billion, could be available, if appropriated, in 2027-2028 fiscal year. And last, I will close today's presentation by sharing a spotlight on an FFA

grantee at the end of the slides. So please go to the next slide. So, as I mentioned, the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment, or BEAD program, is a \$42 billion federal program. California was awarded \$1.86 billion from the program, and the PUC approved it, received its approval from NTIA last week on July 17th. for its final proposal. The final proposal was initially submitted in December of 2025, and this milestone, from submission to approval represents months of work by Commission staff, our federal partners, and especially the preliminary subgrantees who have hung in there with us, and have, and we appreciate all of the efforts, that everyone, especially our subgrantees, have, made to make this happen, and they have been patient throughout the process, and since the submission of the final proposal in December, we have completed 8 rounds of curing requests from NTIA. The outcome of the work has been approval of our proposal to serve 100% of broadband serviceable locations using 76% of the 1.86 billion dollars allocated to California, which comes out to roughly \$1.41 billion, for the final proposal. I want to commend the Commission's Division, Communications Division staff. And all of the folks that worked on making this happen. Excellent work was done, a lot of patience, and we did make it to that final approval finish line. We will provide further updates in the coming weeks on the BEAD final proposal through our website and expect to publish a resolution for public comment outlining the revisions made since our original submission in December in time for our September 17th, 2026, voting meeting. So, we anticipate this resolution will be voted on at that meeting, and it will provide both a summary of changes to locations served and cost savings, and the attached data files will contain information about each individual location in our approved final proposal. So, we're very pleased to have NTIA's approval for this final proposal. It's gonna serve 100% of nearly 270,000 eligible locations, which is the most locations of any state in the country, and approximately 95% of the reduction in BEAD locations comes from low Earth orbit satellite. And also, we were able to offset some of this with some of the grants through our CAF program and getting those commitments, there. So, we are very, very pleased and happy to see that final approval come through. Please go to the next slide. So, the CPUC continues to fund broadband infrastructure projects that expand access to high-speed internet via the CAF application process. During the 2025 application cycle, the PUC received a total of 41 broadband infrastructure grant account applications, requesting approximately \$424 million in funding to provide broadband internet to over 18,000 households. As noted on the top right of the slide, the CPUC recently approved 8 projects for approximately \$68 million at the June 11th and July 2nd voting meetings. These 8 infrastructure projects are in the 7 counties shaded in green on the California map, and they are Humboldt, Inyo, Lassen, Plumas, San Diego, Sierra, and Siskiyou counties. On the bottom right of the slide are 7 additional counties in which another 6 projects for approximately \$74 million went before the Commission and were approved last week. I'm pleased to report that these 6, grants, again, were approved by the Commission and

represent, in purple on the map, Marin, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and Sonoma counties. With the projects approved in last week's commission meeting, the new CISF Broadband Infrastructure Account awards now total over \$141 million. Combined, these 14 new projects are going to serve 3,300 unserved locations in 14 counties across the state. I'd like to highlight that many of the shaded counties with new awards on this map are some of the most rural and remote areas in the state. The PUC Communications Division recently issued additional resolutions for public comment that recommend awarding another \$24 million in projects from the infrastructure grant account, and we are looking to consider those resolutions at our August 13th meeting. And, in addition to the infrastructure grant account, there were 3 other CASF grant programs. With recent application cycles that just closed, those include the Tribal Technical Assistance Account, the Broadband Adoption Account, and the Broadband Public Housing Account. All had application deadlines of July 1st, 2026, and I'll be talking a little more about the adoption account in just a minute. And then, looking ahead, I'm also pleased to report that the PUC has approved the fiscal year 26-27 budget allocation of \$136 million for the CASF program in Resolution T17914. So, with that, please go to the next slide. So, this slide provides updates on our Regional Broadband Consortia account, including recent awards program rule changes and the development of our tribal consortia program and outreach. Commission Decision 25-11-003 made several changes to the program. The decision authorized three new regional tribal consortia for the first time. The Commission recognized that tribal governments have been underserved and need to have Consortia support that is targeted to tribal governments for the needs that tribes have, and that tribes have different needs potentially than counties, and that we wanted to ensure that that service was there, particularly given the number of projects that are being built in tribal communities and by tribes. The decision authorized 3 new regional consortia, expanded the consortia account scope to include BEAD program activities, and streamlined administrative requirements. Resolution T17919 was approved by the Commission in June of 2026. This resolution approved 6 regional consortia count awards for up to \$3.4 million in 16 counties. Notably, these include grants in two consortia that are serving one Silicon Valley and one the East Bay. These were areas that previously were not being served by consortia, and the table on this slide lists the consortia grants that were approved at our June 11th meeting. And they'll be serving San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Alameda, Contra Costa, Solano, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sierra, Inyo, Mono, and Los Angeles counties. And these awards are going to support broadband project development, grant application assistance, mapping, permitting support, and regional coordination. On the bottom right of the slide is a note highlighting the recent CASF Tribal Consortia Workshop, which was hosted by the Mechoopda Indian Tribe at CSU Chico last week on July 14th. There were over 50 people in attendance. The photos show participants in the

workshop, including Sandra Knight of the Mechoopda Tribe, Hayley Stone of CSU Chico, and Northeastern and Upstate Consortia, Thomas Mitchum of CSU Chico's Office of Tribal Relations, Linnea Jackson of Hoopa Valley Public Utilities. Fellow Council member Sunne McPeak also came and spoke about CASF's experience over more than a decade working with consortia around the state. And the workshop, as part of the CPUC's continued outreach related to the development of the tribal consortia, we're going to hold two additional workshops. And one in Northern California, and one in Southern California, and there's a QR code for additional information if you would like it, and there's also information on our website. So, go to the next slide. I'm now gonna talk about our adoption account. The CASF adoption account received 154 applications in January, which had been the highest number in program history until our July 2026 application round. From this large batch in January, the PUC has approved up to \$11.2 million for 114 adoption account projects. On the right side of the slide is a list of those projects by type. There's 106 digital literacy projects, 5 broadband access, and 3 call centers. There are additional projects from this batch that staff plan to recommend for ministerial approval, which are likely to go before the Commission late summer or early fall. On the upper left of the slide is an image taken in Santa Barbara County of community members displaying their digital literacy course completion certificates. The Santa Barbara Partners in Education Computers for Families project ran from 2023 to 2025 and served families experiencing low income, the project focused on rural communities, and we wanted to highlight just the great work that our adoption account is doing throughout California. And below is another image of a literacy class at St. Mary's, and this cohort was one of five East Bay locations participating in the Everyone On East Bay Digital Project, and the project served low-income seniors in Alameda County and helped seniors build the digital skills needed to stay connected and access essential services. Staff is currently reviewing adoption account applications received as part of the July 2026 application round, which yielded even more applications than our January round. We received 160 adoption account applications, bringing the total adoption account application amount this year to \$314. I want to highlight that these grants will be providing resources, such as digital tools, training, and other opportunities that develop into long-standing benefits to the communities they serve. And if you want more information about the adoption account, and any of our other programs, please visit our CASF website on the PUC's webpage. So, let's go to the next slide, which I think is the last slide. And just want to say the PUC's proud to spotlight the City of Fort Bragg and the Fort Bragg Gig Project. The City has been busy installing its new Last Mile broadband infrastructure and putting their \$10.3 million Federal Funding Account grant to good use, as well as other funding sources that made this project possible. Prior to awarding the City of Fort Bragg its Federal Funding Account grant, the PUC awarded the City nearly half a million dollars in 2022 for infrastructure planning under the local agency technical assistance account grant, and I just want to reiterate again,

which we have at other meetings, that, local governments and tribes that participated in our local agency technical assistance or other technical assistance were, much more likely to get, to receive successful FFA or CAFA grants, so technical assistance is really critical, and I want to underscore that. The Fort Bragg project also leverages California's access to Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative, and it's going to support the new traffic network. They're going to be connecting to the Middle-Mile. And the city's strategic use of multiple grants is a prime example of the need for different types of grants and how these programs ultimately build upon one another to produce the kind of results we're seeing through this project. On the left side of the slide is an aerial image of the City of Fort Bragg, and the red lines represent the underground fiber distribution system installation that is currently underway. As of the end of last month, the City of Fort Bragg had completed about 48 miles of underground conduit and 30 miles of fiber cable as of the end of June, and the City expects to be ready to connect the middle mile later this year. Once complete, this project will benefit approximately 7,000 people and bring high-speed internet connections to about 2,500 locations. The project's key data points are listed on the right side of the slide. And I will conclude this, spotlight on the metric that touches the people in the community directly, The Last Mile. This project is intended to be able to provide connectivity to every home, business, public safety location, and anchor institution within the City of Fort Bragg. So, with that, I thank you for the updates, and we'll turn it back over to you, Chair Given.

Thank you, Commissioner Houck. It's a tremendous amount of progress, and it also reflects a tremendous amount of work by not only the PUC, but by communities across the state, so it's an exciting moment. Do any Council members have questions about Commissioner Houck's update?

I'll go last.

I think you might be the only one, so Miss McPeak.

Well, first of all Commissioner Houck. Congratulations on BEAD, and I know that you personally were involved with a lot of the communications with NTIA, I think it's a great success. 8 rounds of curing literally would destroy my mind, so thank you so much for hanging in there with all of the additional CASF awards and FFA, and now BEAD will come along. I'm anticipating some of the same challenges on permitting that, MMBI had. And I want to just flag that and, make sure if Undersecretary Hacker is still listening that, I'm certainly getting a lot of calls about permits, at the local level, and I do think it would be very helpful if the PUC staff sat down with, I'm sure, I know you're in, very close coordination with Mark and the Middle-Mile Network. I think in the permitting on all of the last mile stuff, that there may not be a full understanding throughout Caltrans as to

this is also the same kind of challenge. We really have stepped up the focus on MMBI, but, the deployment, the rapidity of what we can do in deployment's really important with all the dollars that you're putting out, because the price points that were bid or were proposed are going to start slipping if we can't do that. So that's comment number one. Number two is, just to go back to the question I'd asked Mr. Adams about our targets in this year, and reporting in October, when I run the numbers, for the magnitude of the challenge in California for affordability, and look at the piece that CASF plays, which is huge, in, not only deployment, but in adoption. We're really down to about 500,000 households who are unconnected, underconnected, and making fairly good progress there, but 68% of all low-income households who are connected are paying too much. So, the affordability issue, that's about 1.6 million households. And what I can't reconcile, but sit suggests we try to, is with all these revenue streams coming in, and I'll be reporting on one, which is a public benefits agreement, that we try to figure out what those cumulative impacts are for the number of households we need to get connected, provide digital literacy to, and get devices to for full adoption. And that could be a really useful exercise for all of us to get on the same page. Perhaps you I know you do the most work around this, sitting on the council. I invite your direction and leadership on that.

So, first, I want to give the credit to our staff and our consultants. They did an excellent job getting BEAD through and dealing with the aid curing rounds, so I want to make sure I give credit where it's due, and, you know, appreciate the partnership we've got with CDT, with the Middle-Mile. They've been excellent partners, and I think we've also learned a lot through the FFA and CASF permitting for a lot of these projects, and we're hoping that will carry over as we're looking to get the BEAD projects in the ground and, closely coordinate with all of our sister agencies that are involved in this, and we. I intend to continue to do that as well. So, I'm hopeful that it will, it will be a little smoother, but I think we all know when it comes to permitting it, there may be bumps along the way, but we're gonna work through and deal with them, and we've got great partners to do that with. The affordability issue I think we all recognize that's an issue, and the Commission is looking at that issue in various forums, and will continue to do that, and welcome partnership with CETF and CDT, the digital equity, program, and other opportunities to be able to ensure that, we're able to really and effectively get broadband to everyone in California.

Any further questions for Commissioner Houck? Seeing none, we're gonna stick with PUC and, turn things over for our next broadband for All update. We'll hear about adoption and affordability, specifically on the CPUC Lifeline Home Broadband Pilot Program, and Mr. Robert Sansone.

Good morning, everyone. Robert Sansone, Supervisor of the California Lifeline Team. Next slide, please. So, some of you may be aware, we have launched our

home broadband pilot on January 26, 2026. The pilot is a 3-year, voluntary, technology-neutral home broadband pilot to provide affordable home broadband access to low-income Californians. The minimum service standards are 100 down, 20 up mps with 1,280 gigabyte usage allowance. The two exceptions for meeting the minimum service standards there are areas where 120 is not feasible, and they're unable to provide income qual, or they have income-qualified low-cost plans already. The specific support amount for the pilot, which is what we provide, the provider for reimbursement is a \$20 reimbursement for standalone broadband service, and a \$30 reimbursement for bundled service with voice. And you can see here, also, in February, we established a registration for local agencies to join the program as well. Next slide, please. There are currently 18 approved service providers that are participating in the pilot, with one more on the way. Highlights here include Comcast, Verizon Frontier, Time Warner, and various other companies. Next slide, please. Of the providers that have joined, the vast majority are already enrolling customers. There is an onboarding process where the service provider and their IT teams work with our IT teams for our third-party administrator to Onboard their systems to make sure that we can pass customer data correctly and securely. But as you can see here, the vast majority of the providers that have initiated their intention to join are already enrolling customers. Next slide, please. As for advertising the pilot, we have created a one-page broadband pilot flyer. The one-page flyer was created for community-based organizations to distribute at events and increase awareness of the home broadband pilot. You can see it here on the right. We also have a webpage with that's full of information and resources at, you know, the located off of our California Lifeline website, and we also have a provider search off our third-party administrator's website at californialifeline.com, which we're the next few slides are going to be dedicated about. Next slide, please. So, as you can see here, this is what CaliforniaLifeline.com looks like. We have various translations up, for, individuals that come onto the webpage in the top right there, but specific to the provider search, they can click on the link that says provider search. Next slide, please. And upon providing their zip code, they're provided a the full list of available services in their area that are randomized to make sure that we're fair on competition. And they can also, as you can see to the right there, compare plans and what they offer. Next slide, please. As far as who is engaging with the pilot. The vast majority are receiving the discount for broadband only. That is, over 14,000 there, with over 6,000 getting the bundled service that includes voice. Next slide, please. In reaching out to us the vast majority of applicants do call us at our call center, but we do receive email and Chat, inquiries as well. The top call reasons for their inquiries are how to apply, their enrollment status, or just general program information. Next slide, please. Oh, that's it. So that's the latest update for the broadband pilot. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Sansone. Do any Council members have questions for Mr. Sansone?

I do, a quick one. Mr. Sansone, how many people are yet to be reviewed and approved by the third-party administrator who've requested approval for Lifeline?

So, we do have a. We had a surge of applicants that were, came from Comcast, but I believe the vast majority of those Applicants and, you know, an analysis of that data, were because of a marketing strategy by Comcast, where they just promoted the program generally and passed everyone that was interested into the enrollment process. We think that the applications that are pending right now, for the most part, are because those applicants either changed their minds or realized they weren't eligible for the program. That's about 20,000 pending applications.

Thank you.

Any additional questions? Thank you, Mr. Sansone. Finally, for our last Broadband for All update, I would like to call on Ms. Nguyen and Mr. Spencer to provide an update on the State Digital Equity Plan.

Thank you, Chair. As Deputy Director Scott Adams mentioned earlier, and as demonstrated by all the speakers before me, achieving Broadband for All requires partnership across the ecosystem. Stakeholder and partner engagement is one of the three strategies to implement the state digital equity plan. Next slide. The monthly Digital Equity Community of Practice is an example of that, as it fosters alignment, coordination, and collaboration within the statewide digital equity ecosystem. Additionally, by bringing in subject matter experts to provide insights into relevant topics requested by our ecosystem partners, we're responsive to the needs of our partners. For example, we had a digital equity data panel last month a panel discussing technology access for individuals with disabilities the month before that, and we also invited our very own California Chief Technology Innovation Officer, Vera Zakem, to discuss AI and digital equity. As you can see here, we've seen consistent attendance and registration numbers in the past 3 meetings, and at 3 earlier this year. Additionally, all meetings, recordings, minutes, transcripts, and presentations are posted on the Broadband for All portal and shared with registered participants. For on-demand viewing. Next slide, please. The second digital equity implementation strategy is to develop tools and resources. In addition to the Affordable Service Finder, the funding finder that are on our website on our portal, we've also enhanced the Digital Equity Resource Finder. as reported last April, CBC. The team has continued to expand and promote the Finder since. We have grown the number of organizations to 249, and number of locations to

949. That's 15 new organizations and 73 new locations. The table in blue shows new contributors to the finder, including state entity partners. Many library system, due to our partnership with the California State Library, so thank you, Mr. Chisom. Nonprofits, CBOs, and local governments, as listed on the right. An exciting partnership to highlight is our partnership with the County of Los Angeles, where CDT worked with LA County ISD to embed this very same Digital Equity Resource Finder onto the county website, and preset search results to Los Angeles County. This demonstrates the efficient use of public resources to maximize impact across California. Because the County Supervisor were asking the county ISD team to essentially develop the same tool. So, we were able to effectively use a tool that has been developed by the state and implement that in LA. I will now ask Broadband Administrative Manager James Spencer to share about the Digital Inclusion Partnerships.

Yeah, thanks, Anh. So, another leg of our Digital Equity Implementation strategy was to leverage existing partnerships and develop new ones to implement the strategies and key activities outlined in the Digital Equity Plan. So, last time I was here, we talked about the request for innovative ideas that was incredibly successful, and he gave us some great ideas. We closed it out and established 7 unique partnerships that are specifically aligned towards activities related to the Digital Equity Plan. So, the slide here illustrates how we have partners to promote and track low-cost offers. We have partners who are providing access to digital literacy skills and training platforms. We have partners who are going to help train Digital Navigators. There's folks who are working on a statewide device ecosystem. There's 3 unique efforts to refine digital equity data, and then some neat partnerships around providing access to online educational and workforce development resources. So, we're really excited about these partnerships that are going to be providing services to community-based organizations to fill public need, which does lead me to my last slide. So, our next Community of Practice is going to be on July 30th. We're going to introduce the partnerships there, and the services and the resources that are being provided to attendees at the Community of Practice, so they can find out how to make use of those resources if they choose. And that concludes my update.

Thank you, Mr. Spencer. Thank you, Ms. Nguyen. Do any Council members have questions?

I don't.

Thank you. If you click the mic, turn mic on button, or you.

I, like, didn't want to just start speaking, but I did anyway, so. Thank you, oops, thank you for the update. And, you know, it's always great to hear about what is going on with, you know, with all the work that's going on with the Middle-Mile

and Last Mile. But I do want to bring up, as we talk about the digital equity plan, two issues that are looming in the K-12 library space that I hope we can kind of talk about that could really be upending affordability and. And equity for our K-12, and I see Member Chisom is on as well. I'll let him speak on behalf of the libraries if he would like to speak up to that, but right now, we have two issues, the FCC is proposing changes to the E-rate program, and that is, that brings \$400 million, approximately, to our schools and our libraries statewide, which will punch a big hole in our budgets, if we, if we don't try to address that, and we are trying to address that with the federal government. We also have some changes, that we are looking at that would also be impacting us, through the California Tele-Connect Fund. That would, deem ineligible, our institutions, our county offices, and our districts, district offices that have been coordinating these programs for 25 years. And so, we know that our schools and our libraries, as Ms. McPeak mentioned, those areas that are unconnected, they rely on free and reliable internet from our schools and our libraries, and we will be facing some issues there if we cannot look at this holistically, as a council and as a state, as to how we may have to, fill in some of these holes. And the real impact on digital equity that we have all been, you know, working towards. So, I just wanted to raise that up as something that we're trying to address, in a time when our schools are facing budget deficits with declining enrollment, and the issues that may be surrounding us, regarding, you know, just very tight budgets. So, I don't know, Josh, if you want to chime in on that or not.

Only just to echo what you said, we are facing some concerning developments at the federal level, around the E-Rate program, which, yeah, as you said, it's, I think around close to \$2 billion over the last 5 years has come into the state via discounts on our broadband services for schools and libraries. And if, you know the worst happens, and those are substantially cut, that money's gonna have to come from somewhere, because as I'm sure we all know in this room, you know, we can't just go, oh, we'll just turn the internet off and keep moving. That's not how schools and libraries work anymore. So, yeah, thank you, Member Nicely for raising this issue, and I agree with everything you said.

I appreciate you flagging this issue, Deputy Superintendent Nicely and Mr. Chisom. Are there any additional questions on digital equity?

Has the FCC opened, Mary, a formal proceeding on E-rate reform?

I know that they have. Yes, and we're preparing our comments, and reaching out to the school communities as well, and working also with our university partners. Even though they don't get the subsidies, they do know that it will impact the CENIC network as well. So that funding it's a wide-ranging issue that will be impacting all of our higher education institutions as well, just in a little

different way. For us, it's just more of a very, it'll just be a hit, like, right away on us, and how to fill those holes, yeah.

A follow-on comment, the Universal Services Fund, I think, has needed reform for a long time. It's like this \$4 billion annual box, opaque box. Having said that, we spent a lot of time. Years ago, in an E-rate proceeding, and if CDE, the library. Would just share, maybe among the council members, I we will go in and dust off what we had and try to update it as well, so thank you for bringing me up to date on the proceeding that's open. Thank you.

Any further comment? Alright. Thank you, Ms. Nguyen. Thank you, Mr. Spencer. Next on our agenda is Member Spotlight. I would like to welcome California Emerging Technology Fund President and CEO Sunne McPeak to provide progress on their work on the Verizon Frontier public benefit agreements since the last report.

These public benefit agreements represent a significant opportunity and resources to support Broadband for All implementation here in California. Ms. McPeak?

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Let's go to the next slide. I do want to acknowledge that, in 19 listening sessions, the Department of Technology participated in every one of them. Commissioner Houck's staff was in almost all of them, as was California Advocates. I think that was pretty significant. So, 19 listening sessions in essentially 2 months, and, this has been, you know, now completed. There was, there's 2 major strands of investment that was negotiated with Verizon for public benefits that relate to non-infrastructure. There's a whole lot of other public benefits in infrastructure. One is \$40 million into digital inclusion, another is, it was \$1 million that CETF is to manage to assist them to provide \$500 million in contracts to small businesses in California. I want to hasten to add that the Public Utilities Commission approved the public benefits agreement, so it is the Commission that really has the primary, I think, credit here and responsibility for having approved the transaction with significant public benefits that add to all the other revenue streams that have been reported on. So, our job is really to show how this can be complementary. The purpose of the listening sessions was to figure out how to have those public benefit investments complement what is our Digital Equity Plan, the Broadband for All Plan not to be in any way a substitute for either the process that developed those plans, or a substitute for those plans. It's to be an augmentation. So, in terms of the Digital Inclusion sessions, we have the numbers, that there were 152 registered, 137 attended, and then we received 47 proposals for how people could help achieve the primary outcomes that we were responsible for in those public benefits agreements, which is to get 100,000 unconnected households online and digitally proficient. The Second strand that we received was the million, and

right now, essentially 200,000 of that immediately was put out into grants to business networks to co-convene listening sessions with us. And in that case, for example, the, LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce of California, the California African American Chamber of Commerce, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. It's actually the California Hispanic Chambers of Commerce, the Asian Chamber of Commerce, California Workforce Association, the Foundation for California Community Colleges, Small Business Utility Association, the National Disability Institute. I think those go through the primary, business partners or networks that co-convene these listening sessions, and 459 people registered, 245 attended, and we received Proposals for all 9 of the co-convening partners. To carry on the next step, and the next step I'm gonna go through in just a moment, but I do want to, note that this is a pretty tight schedule that everybody operated on, to do, this kind of, of effort. So, in July, we are currently trying to get completed grant agreements for those organizations on digital inclusion, and said, we're fine with the framework. That was the underpinning of these listening sessions for helping get 100,000 households online and do Digital Literacy training. We're then going to, in the next couple of months, talk to everybody else. Our goal is to see how we can't get everybody into the partnership who wants to be a part of the solution. Many times, organizations are looking for money to sustain themselves, and I understand that, as opposed to how are they going to contribute to what is the result That we have to achieve as a consequence of the public benefits agreement. With the small business, organizations, we have continued to work with them. We're going to put out \$300,000 additional dollars immediately to them. We're trying to figure out what is the fairest way. We're having the conversation with them about how is the fairest way, in order to accelerate Let's go to the next chart. If we can, which is, I'll summarize. What is the outcome in terms of the small business investment by Verizon, which is \$5 billion nationwide? We secured 100. I'm sorry, 10% of that \$500 million for California, with an incentive that if we get the first \$100 million in contracts completed, they'll put another \$150 million in. To have \$650 million for small business is a huge investment. It's larger than I've seen in my lifetime, which is several decades in this business. So, we don't want to lose this opportunity. Now, what is the goal of that? It is so that our suppliers For Verizon and all other regulated utilities, and the workforce represents the California population. There is a huge mismatch. For 40 years, these companies have reported under General Order 156 to the PUC, and I do want to say it's an embarrassment to all of them that they have not made more progress. And so, this is our opportunity, and our overall metric is, in 5 years, when we finish this work, we better damn well have suppliers and a workforce that represents the California population. So, we keep that focus, which is consistent with how we have defined the FCC's, willingness to support non-discrimination and equal opportunity. By definition if we don't have a workforce or suppliers that represent California's population, then there is, by definition, unequal opportunity and discrimination somewhere. And that's what we all have to get our arms around.

So, the digital inclusion listening sessions that Mr. Adams and his team will tell you reinforced everything we heard in 2023, doing 20 workshops in 3 months. So, it is that you've got to have trusted community messengers. The term Digital Navigator, who's trained to actually connect resources, but not just to refer people, to actually get them connected to the internet and digitally proficient and help them find an affordable device. Everything must be in language and in culture. And that sensitivity has to be built in from the very beginning. We want to work through existing networks, which is why everybody of the 47 he proposed, we want in the boat. You know, we might have to figure out how to modify the boat, but we really want them to all be in the family, this family that you're building that complements everything that you heard Ms. Nguyen talk about in terms of the progress having been made, and those who are part of the portal for the Department of Technology. It is really most helpful to integrate services, integrate Digital Inclusion into existing services. When a deputy director nicely talks about the schools, or Mr. Chisom about libraries, it is more effective if the educators and the librarians are helping their patrons, their customers, their students, their parents actually do the adoption, as opposed to us starting whole cloth. It is why when Secretary Snider-Ashtari talks to tribes. They or Commissioner Houck, they're going to listen in a different way. What they're doing makes, is going to have more effect if we're now incorporating digital inclusion into every other service they have, such as doing tribal TANF. So that's the whole goal here. Let's not keep reinventing additional wheels on a wagon. Let's try to improve those that we have Technical Assistance and support really is becoming important for a number of the smaller CBOs. They cannot replicate everything that has to be done at a more economical scale, which is why Mr. Adams talks about a digital equity ecosystem. And lastly, everybody wants sustained money and flexibility, and often what they mean by that is, just give us more money to do the work that we've been doing. We have an interesting conversation about; we have to achieve these outcomes. Those are not negotiable. They're actually in a public benefits agreement I signed with Verizon and the Commission approved. What is flexible is how you get there. Please show us the best way, a better way. Let's keep trying to drive to the greater efficiency. Those are the outcomes on digital inclusion listening sessions, so we have a focus on outcomes and performance standards, but flexibility in implementation. On the small business side, if we can go to the next slide. And by the way these QR codes are the action plans that are that have been compiled. Summaries of all 19 listening sessions, they're online. Also, not only for CETF, but, at the Department of Technology, full, you know, transparency, we hope. With the conversation with the small business and network, organizations, and I think the first realization I want to underscore is not all members of these ethnic or specialized chambers are small. Many are long time very experienced companies that are their own that are primes, that are not just always subs. And there has to be a recognition of the spectrum of experience in order to get to that diversity that we want that represents the California population. And so, the concept that arose from them

is a multi-lane approach. Verizon has tools, they call them Digital Ready and the Small Business Accelerator program, but there needs to be a fast lane to procurement with much more proactive effort by all of the utilities, including Verizon, to address the procurement challenge. Do not make it hard for businesses to know that you have a bid open. Tell them, very proactively. There are operational needs that each of these organizations also need in order to reach their members. They have a potential reach that is 650,000 businesses in California, and they think they can engage directly 49,000. That's pretty good, but they have to have capacity. And support to do that. There has to be ongoing, sustained relationships from all of the regulated utilities with these organizations. They need the tools, and Verizon has great tools, to assist, but people are not going to use the tools unless there is some assistance to get over the inertia of them just trying to find the next contract to keep to remain in business. And lastly, if I might just echo a common message here, work with the existing networks. Going to the next slide. We are going to be reporting out, not only here. We do Community of Practice grantee learning communities, so there's reporting to each other, performance benchmarking, we also do annual reports to the parties, each other, and then we do annual reports to the legislature through the California Public Utilities Commission. So that is, I think, our last slide, and what we are hoping to be the, a capstone on reporting the progress of using this public benefit agreement to augment everything else going on in California. That was my last slide, right? It is indeed your last slide.

Thank you, Ms. McPeak. Do any Council members have questions?

Oh, thank you.

You put me on the spot, since I ask questions of everybody else, but you don't have to.

It is a tremendous amount of engagement, and it's always so gratifying to see people joining your bigger boat, so thank you so much. Oh! is there a question on the, Oh, Scott! Thank you.

Ms. McPeak, congratulations on going through the process on the public benefit agreement. Something that, with the funding we received for the adoption.

Hey, Scott, can you turn on your mic?

Thank you. Of the 46,

It's 40.

Of the 40 folks that,

Oh, I'm sorry, 47 who proposed. And I thought you were talking about millions. I would love to have 46 or 47, I only have 40.

Okay, well, no, I mean the after going through the planning process, the initial cohort of folks, could you tell the Council how many grants that you're going to be giving to them, and when they're going to start doing work?

Right now, we're in discussion, with 17 about 24 immediately, and so that's and we're hoping they begin August 1, so that's only a few days away. And they are a combination of Straightforward digital literacy training agreement to use a digital equity ecosystem, having digital navigators certified through the CSU system, who have completed their 20 hours and are using the same, they're aligning to the Public Utilities Commission digital literacy requirements. So, that's the Digital Literacy training. In the framework we have, we for the \$40 million, we can fund directly about 5,000 households to be trained. We expect. Based on the past two and a half years, that of the 100,000 households who will sign up for the to get connected to the internet that about 25% will say they actually want to participate in Digital Literacy training. And it we do a very active cell. Our call center agents are digital navigators of a certain order, and they will, really urge somebody to go through a program, and then we refer to, for synchronous learning, a CBO that is close to them, so they can do it either in person or online in a group, but they have in their community a close CBO. That will include not only those that we are funding, but also those that the Public Utilities Commission adoption account are funding. So, we are doing that interface. That's about 17, and another 7 are going to be signing up to do, to support the call center.

Thank you.

Very exciting. Any further questions? Alright, next on our agenda is Community Spotlight. So, given that broadband access and availability in the form of infrastructure deployment makes up a significant part of the Broadband for All program, I would love to welcome Assistant Director Hayley Stone and Project Manager Lily McGlothorn from the North State Planning and Development Collective to share findings from a recent report which focused on addressing needs and gaps associated with developing a broadband workforce in California's North State to support last-mile broadband infrastructure deployment.

Hi, everyone. Thanks for having us. Good morning. My name is Hayley Stone, and I'm here representing the North State Planning and Development Collective at Chico State, or California State University, Chico. Our organization connects the university with local governments, community organizations, industry partners, and regional leaders to support economic development, workforce

initiatives, GIS and applied research, and regional planning across the North State and beyond. One of our major areas of work is broadband planning and coordination through our two regional broadband consortia, the Northeastern California Connect and Upstate California Connect. We work with counties, cities, tribes, internet service providers, state agencies, and community partners to identify broadband needs. Support infrastructure planning and help communities pursue funding opportunities. We're especially glad to be here today so that Lily, one of our project managers, can present on the broadband workforce study that we completed earlier this year. Lily will elaborate on the findings, but the study helps connect our broadband planning work with regional workforce needs to better support broadband development and long-term digital infrastructure across the region. I'll turn it over to Lily.

Great, thank you for that introduction, Hayley. Good afternoon, everyone. And I'd like to thank the CDT for the opportunity to share the findings of the North State Connected Building a Local Broadband Workforce in California's North State. So, this focus, the focus of this report is not simply broadband access or adoption, it is specifically about workforce needed to build, maintain, support, and support broadband infrastructure across our rural North State Region. As Broadband Infrastructure investments accelerate through state and federal programs, the central question we examined was does our region have the workforce, training capacity, and coordination structure needed to meet near-term and future broadband deployment needs? Next slide, please. Thank you. So, our report focuses on the NECC and UCC regions, which together cover 10 inland North State counties. This is a largely rural region with significant geographic complexity, including mountainous terrain, low population density, wildfire recovery needs, and dispersed communities that affect both broadband deployment and workforce availability. The key point is that Broadband Infrastructure funding and projects are moving forward, but the success of those projects depends in part on whether the region can supply and retain skilled workers. We can go to the next slide, please. Thank you. So, this slide shows the two evidence streams behind our report. We used secondary data to understand the regional broadband, labor market, training, and project landscape, and then paired that with direct input from the people working in the system. The primary stakeholder data is what helped ground the report in real implementation conditions. We asked our partners how ISPs are hiring, where training providers see capacity limits, what local, tribal, and community partners see as the biggest barriers to building a local broadband workforce. And we can move on to the next slide. So, one of the most important findings was that employer demand exists. But it does not look like a large hiring surge. It is more modest, steady, and very project driven. ISP is generally reported needing small numbers of workers per role over the next 1 to 2 years with the hardest-to-fill needs concentrated in field-based roles. Employers also emphasized that they prefer to hire locally but often struggle to find candidates

with the right hands-on skills. When they hire from outside the service region, the reasons are often lack of qualified local candidates, limited local experience or certifications, or difficulty competing with larger utilities and firms on wages. So, on the training side, the region has many related programs, including construction, electrical, and line worker training, but we found limited Broadband-specific training. And when speaking to our training providers, they expressed interest in supporting broadband workforce development, but identified barriers like lack of program funding, instructor shortages, equipment costs, and curriculum approval times. We can go to the next slide. So, our report identifies five key findings. You can see those listed on this slide, and the report goes into depth on each of these. But as we looked at the larger picture, we discovered that these findings show broadband workforce needs in the North State are steady, local, and practical. However, the region needs better alignment between employer demand, hands-on training, and coordinated placement pathways, especially in rural, tribal, and post-disaster communities where labor pools and training access are limited. And we can go to the next slide. So, our report lays out recommendations unique to each stakeholder group, but point toward a coordinated, practical workforce strategy, rather than a single new program. Employers need to clearly communicate hiring needs and field readiness expectations. Training providers need short, hands-on modules that can fit into existing programs, and workforce, local, tribal, and regional partners need shared systems for recruitment, placement, supportive services, and coordination. The main takeaway being that broadband deployment and workforce development need to be planned together. In the North State, the challenge is less about hiring large numbers and more about building a coordinated local pipeline that can support rural broadband projects over time. And we can go to our last slide, please. So here you'll find a QR code for the full report, and at its core, North State Connected shows that broadband workforce development in rural California is not just a labor issue. It's an implementation issue. If we want broadband investment to reach rural, tribal, and post-disaster communities on time and with lasting impact, we need local workforce pathways that are practical, coordinated, and grounded in the realities of the field. Thank you.

Thank you so much. Do any Council members have questions? Ms. McPeak?

Yeah, I think that was a great report, Hayley and, and Lily. So, when is your next summit, and what number of annual summits are you will this one be?

Our next summit is gonna be August 6th, and it's the 8th annual.

And what time, so everybody can attend?

So, yes. Yes, of course. It is going to be virtually from 9 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. And we have some great speakers and panelists lined up. And if you're curious about how to register, you can let me know, and I can forward information.

Thank you so much. It's funny.

Thank you for the leading question. Are there other questions? Yes, Commissioner? I just wanted to thank you for the presentation and recognize all the work that Chico State is doing in this area, and again, thank Chico State for co-hosting our Tribal Consortium workshop earlier this month.

Thanks. Of course, Dr. Commissioner Houck.

Hi, yeah, thank you, thank you for the update. I know that we've worked a lot with our, North, northern, north state, K-12 schools. And so, a question I have is regarding, if there's discussions as we look at workforce development around, like, cybersecurity, and how that may play into, you know, once, you know, people who are disconnected don't have to worry as much as people who are connected, and how that plays into any of the planning or any of the training that you are going to be conducting.

Lily? Sorry. regarding cybersecurity and any upcoming training that we're planning, we haven't gotten that far just yet. We're still working on coordinating with our employers and our trainers and really getting this conversation started and going. So, it's definitely something that we can keep in mind as we move forward, though. So, thank you for that.

Yes, and I'll add that our ISPs have are wanting to move towards this whole, like, a holistic package for consumers that offers, like, customer service type stuff as well, and so I definitely see an opportunity to build cybersecurity into that fold.

Secretary Ashtari?

I just wanted to commend you all also for the cross-collaborative work. I think this is really interesting and cool, and can't wait to see how it goes. My question is, do you have a way of measuring outcomes? Like, you've got your proposed. How we move forward, but it would be great to see how you're checking in with folks as you start, as folks start kind of adopting these recommendations.

Do you want me to go? I can take it a little, and then you can follow up if I miss anything, but the main sort of feedback loop that we have right now is our quarterly ISP roundtables. At our last one, we took the presentation and talked with ISPs and also workforce development and community college training partners, and had a really robust conversation about like, identifying real,

tangible ways that we can move forward. And the general feedback from everyone in attendance was that this the to just being able to have the conversation with the right people in the rooms was a really great, positive next step. I think so often, like, education and industry operate a little bit siloed, and to be able to bring them together and have a conversation was really productive. Lily, if you have anything to add.

Not really. I think in general, this report and the interest in it has really taken us by surprise a bit. So, we're just really thrilled that we're getting the engagement that we had really hoped to when we first kind of thought about what we wanted to research in our region in relation to broadband deployment. So, the current streams are those ISP roundtables, and the initial people at our table talking with us and getting this really moving.

That's great. Thank you so much, and great work.

Thank you.

Any last questions? Okay, really fantastic. We very much appreciate you joining. Now we'll move on to public comment. Ms. Nguyen, will you please provide the public comment guidelines and begin the public comment?

Thank you, Chair. To ensure everyone who wishes to make a public comment can do so, we respectfully request one person per entity in two minutes per person. The order of public comments will be in-person comments, Zoom and phone comments and emailed comments submitted prior to the meeting. For in-person comments, please form a line at the podium. For Zoom, please use your raise hand feature in the lower toolbar, or star 9, if you're calling in by phone, to raise your hand. Emailed comments received prior to the meeting will be read at the very end. We will start with the first person in line at the podium. Sure, I am not seeing any, so next we will hear comments from Zoom via hands raised.

There are two. The first hand I see is from Mr. Patrick Messac.

Good morning, Council members. I'm Patrick Messac, Co-Director with the East Bay Broadband Consortium. The prohibitive cost of internet remains the number one barrier to functional broadband access. California has an affordability benefit available, and we should make sure eligible families can use it. At the last Broadband Council meeting, I raised one barrier we could fix now. Eligibility for students attending the state's highest poverty schools, referred to as Community Eligibility Provision Schools, or CEP. The Lifeline Broadband Pilot recognizes participation in the National School Lunch Program as an eligibility pathway. CEP is a federally authorized provision within that same program, designed specifically to serve high-poverty schools. And the FCC already

recognized students attending CEP schools under the NSLP eligibility pathway for the Affordable Connectivity Program. Yet today, California still does not yet recognize CEP attendance in the same way. Since our last meeting, we've been working with the CPUC staff, public advocates, CETF, industry, and others on a path forward. There appears to be near universal support for recognizing CEP within the existing NSLP program pathway. Our ask is simple, and it has been simple. Before back to school, issue an interpretation clarifying that CEP is included within the existing NSLP eligibility pathway, using the most efficient legal mechanism available. Schools are preparing now to communicate with families. If we act now, they can point families toward an actual affordability solution when students return. If we wait, we lose that window for another school year. Finally, I want to recognize CDT's Middle-Mile team for working directly with Last Mile Projects to solve implementation challenges and turn the promise of the Middle-Mile Network into Last Mile connections for communities. Designing infrastructure to deliver public benefit, especially in communities that the market has historically underserved, is never simple. But the tried path has left too many communities behind. This is the kind of collaborative problem solving that we need now to close the digital divide. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Messac.

Thank you. Next, we have Lindsey Skone. Please come off mute.

Good morning, members of the Council. My name is Lindsey Skolnik. I'm here speaking on behalf of the California Alliance for Digital Equity. First, I wanted to share my excitement about the number of applications the CPUC received for CASF adoption account grants. At a time when funding for digital equity activities and programs is hard to come by passive plays a critical role in maintaining the state's digital equity ecosystem. CADE feels it is important that the CPUC is empowered to maintain and find ways to strengthen the CASF program so that it can continue to serve as a funding bedrock for various local stakeholders that are working to increase connectivity in their communities. I also wanted to acknowledge the CPUC for providing community-based organizations with the Lifeline Home Broadband Pilot Flyer. CADE is working with our partners to promote the pilot program, and as that is underway, it'd be immensely helpful to also have access to more public information about all plans providers are offering through the pilot, and where those services are being offered across the state. In the past, I've suggested this information could be published in the form of a map, but even just a comprehensive list on the website would make it easier to tailor promotional materials regionally and explain the full suite of offerings available to residents. Thank you so much for the consideration of my comments. CADE is grateful for the leadership of this Council and looks forward to advancing our collective work to close the digital divide.

Thank you, Ms. Skolnik.

Thank you. We did not receive any comments emailed prior to the meeting, and there are no more comments in Zoom or here in the room. So, Director Given, Chair, that ends our public comment session.

Thank you, Ms. Nguyen. Are there any Council members who would like to make additional comments before we close the meeting? Absolutely.

Thank you. Just really briefly in response to Ms. Skolnik's comment, I would encourage you to look at our website and the materials that were presented earlier by our staff on the affordability, and look at the website that has the list of providers for the pilot, and if there's additional information you think would be helpful, please reach out to our staff, and thank you for the comment.

Any further comments? Okay, I want to thank the council members and presenters for their contributions today, and to the members of the public, Mr. Messac and Ms. Skolnik, for their thoughtful comments. I also want to express my gratitude for those working so diligently to move things forward, including the staff at both CDT and Sacramento County Administration Center, working behind the scenes to support the CBC. Your work is valued, and you make great contributions to advancing Broadband for All. Our next meeting is scheduled for Friday, October 23rd, 2026, starting at 9.30 a.m. here in the board chambers and online. We look forward to seeing everyone there. With that, we conclude the July 24th, 2026, California Broadband Council Meeting. Thank you, everybody.