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January 5, 2024

**RE: SUPPORT Extending the Affordable Connectivity Program**

Dear Members of the California Congressional Delegation:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), which represents all 58 counties in California, I'm writing to urge you to take action to extend funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP).

Enacted as part of the *2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (P.L. 117-58), the ACP provides low-income households with a discount of up to \$30 per month for internet service and up to \$75 per month on qualifying Tribal lands or high-cost locations, making an internet subscription affordable for all – and in many cases, entirely free. In conjunction with historic State and Federal investments in broadband infrastructure and digital equity, the ACP has resulted in bridging the digital divide by closing the affordability gap in communities across the country.

In California, there are over 5.8 million ACP-eligible households, representing 45 percent of all households in the state. To date, over 2.8 million of those households are enrolled in the ACP, with program participation continuing to steadily increase every month. The ACP ensures that low-income Californians gain and continue to have access to affordable, reliable, and high-quality advanced communications services. As demonstrated over the course of the last three years, broadband internet service is indispensable for employment, education, health care, commerce, community building, civic engagement, and government services.

Unfortunately, funding for the ACP is projected to be exhausted by April of this year. Without congressional action to extend the program, millions of Californians who rely on the ACP, including low-income seniors, veterans, and students, would see their internet bill increase. Moreover, in some cases, households may lose internet access altogether.

Additionally, the loss of the ACP would reduce the efficacy of the IJA's \$42 billion investment in the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program, which is a key component of federal efforts aimed at ensuring that everyone in America – including individuals and families in hard-to-serve rural areas – has access to affordable, reliable high-speed internet. Pursuant to a recent study, the existence of the ACP reduces by 25 percent the per-household subsidy needed to incentivize internet service

providers to build in rural areas.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, sustained ACP funding is critical as broadband companies and others consider the level of public and private investment needed to fulfill Congress' goal of universal affordable broadband deployment and adoption.

In closing, CSAC urges you to ensure that long-term ACP funding is a top priority for inclusion in the final fiscal year 2024 appropriations package or other legislative vehicle. Continued investment in this critically important program will ensure that low-income individuals across California and throughout the nation will have access to essential communications services and that the rollout of federal BEAD program funds will help support efforts aimed at ensuring high-quality, affordable internet for all.

Thank you for your ongoing work on broadband issues and for your attention to this critically important request. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Joe Krahn, CSAC's Washington representative, at 202-898-1444 or [jk@paragonlobbying.com](mailto:jk@paragonlobbying.com).

Sincerely,



Graham Knaus, CEO  
California State Association of Counties

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<sup>1</sup> Kelsey Clark, et al., Closing the Digital Divide Benefits Everyone, Not Just the Disconnected: An Analysis of How Universal Connectivity Benefits Education, Health Care, Government Services, and Employment," Common Sense Media (2022), <https://www.common sense media.org/research/closing-the-digital-divide-benefits-everyone-not-just-the-unconnected>.