



California State  
Association of Counties



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**Statewide Coalition Applauds Historic Broadband Investment**

SACRAMENTO – In a significant victory for counties, coalition allies and all Californians, Governor Gavin Newsom signed [SB 156](#) into law, providing a historic \$6 billion investment in broadband infrastructure. A cross-sector coalition representing local government, schools, hospitals, economic development organizations and more worked for months to support the package, the most significant investment in public broadband infrastructure in the country.

The coalition includes the California State Association of Counties, California Association of School Business Officials, California Hospital Association, California Forward Action Fund, California School Boards Association, Rural County Representatives of California, Small School Districts’ Association, NextGen California, and the Urban Counties of California.

The broadband infrastructure investments will benefit residents across the state, connecting millions of families and businesses by providing \$2 billion of direct funding for last-mile network construction in both rural and urban centers of California, prioritizing unserved and underserved residents, ensuring the funds flow where they are needed most.

Last-mile investments will be even better leveraged by the \$3.25 billion earmarked to construct a statewide open-access middle-mile network, an essential first step towards increasing connectivity and affordability for all by making it easier for more internet providers to offer faster, cheaper service

throughout the state. This is especially important for the nearly 15 million Californians who live in a broadband monopoly.

This legislation utilizes billions in one-time federal funds to provide a permanent benefit by building broadband infrastructure throughout every region of the state.

**Coalition Partner Quotes:**

“California has seized the moment to close the digital divide with broadband for all. Thanks to the coalition efforts, the Legislature’s unanimous approval of SB/AB 156 and Governor Newsom’s signature, we helped ensure that needs of the people triumphed over telecom profits,” said CSAC President and Sonoma County Supervisor James Gore. “This action paves the way for millions of Californians — from inner city families to small businesses in the most remote reaches of the state — to now be connected.”

“Broadband is as essential to modern life as electricity and indoor plumbing,” said Micah Weinberg, Director of the California Forward Action Fund. “We applaud the Legislature and the Governor for valuing the interest of the people over the profits of a few companies. Much like all levels of government invested in transportation and electrical infrastructure in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this legislation represents a 21<sup>st</sup> century infrastructure investment that will serve all Californians.”

“This broadband infrastructure package is a rural county lifeline and will transform the way schools, small businesses, healthcare organizations, and others can provide goods and services statewide,” said CSAC 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President and Siskiyou County Supervisor Ed Valenzuela.

“Increasing access to broadband is foundational to equitable access to healthcare for all Californians,” said Carmela Coyle, President & CEO of the California Hospital Association. “The enactment of SB 156 is a transformational moment for the health and well-being of our state, and California’s hospitals are grateful to the Governor and the Legislature for their vision and willingness to take this important step forward.”

"After so many years of advocacy for universal broadband, it's encouraging to see that bills like SB 156 are moving us closer to the day when all Californians, particularly our students, can take advantage of this essential requirement for modern life and use it to accelerate their academic, career, and social pursuits," said California School Boards Association President Vernon M. Billy. "Now, we must work to ensure that this funding translates into equitable implementation that provides access to students in every part of the state."

“The passage of SB 156 demonstrates our state’s leadership in addressing the existing broadband inequities by creating long-term solutions that will have meaningful and long-lasting benefits to ensure that families and students have affordable and accessible options, forging a path to close the digital divide gap for all students,” said Sara Bachez, Chief Governmental Relations Officer for CASBO.

“We are encouraged by the State’s recognition that reliable broadband infrastructure is as essential as electricity for families and businesses in our rural communities,” said Stacy Corless, RCRC Chair and Mono County Supervisor. “We appreciate this significant investment which will advance the provision of equitable, affordable access to high-speed internet for all Californians.”

“This is tremendous news for everyone in California, especially the families with children and lower-income communities of color who are less likely to have broadband access in the home,” said CSAC 2nd Vice President and Riverside County Supervisor Chuck Washington. “This broadband package is a huge leap forward for equity, access and affordability across the state.”

“With the signing of SB 156, CA has allocated an unprecedented level of funding to solve the digital divide. We want to thank the Legislature and Governor for this bold and historic investment. We look forward to the work ahead and are committed to ensuring that all communities in our state get connected to high quality Internet service,” said Arnold Sowell Jr. Executive Director NextGen California.

“Public infrastructure for public good is one of the greatest services of government and we are so thrilled with this historic action and investment. Thank you, Governor Newsom, the Legislature, and all our partners for this direct investment into our communities,” said CSAC Executive Director Graham Knaus. “This is great progress, but there is still work to be done. We look forward to working with the Administration over the summer to pass legislation that will ensure affordable broadband access for all.”

*California State Association of Counties (CSAC) is the voice of California’s 58 counties at the state and federal level.*

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