MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN   November 21, 2023

5-Signature Letter to Support the Affordable Connectivity Program

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) helps ensure that income eligible households can afford high-speed home internet service necessary for work, school, healthcare, and essential services. It has provided a discount of up to $30/month for internet service (or a discount up to $75/month for households on qualifying Tribal lands); and a one-time discount of up to $100 for a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet purchased through a participating provider. This program has provided critical financial assistance to help American households access high-speed broadband, which is vital for participating in a 21st-century economy.

Los Angeles County (County) is committed to closing the digital divide and the ACP is a necessary tool to accomplish this goal. In the County, areas where more than 20 percent of households lack broadband service are largely the same areas where the household income is less than $50,000 a year, and where people of color are more likely to live. Communities without sufficient internet connectivity struggle to keep pace in a rapidly changing world increasingly dependent on technology. Closing the digital divide

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benefits everyone, not just the disconnected. The County supports fully funding the ACP for its ability to further develop and expand broadband infrastructure and reliable, affordable networks to bridge the digital divide, provide connectivity and services, increase access to high-speed internet to benefit as many households as possible, and ensure digital inclusion, particularly in underserved communities.

The ACP has a significant impact on County programming and local funding. It has helped to fund the Digital Navigators and County libraries to provide a community-centered approach to improving broadband adoption, computer training and digital literacy for community members and small businesses. The navigators are trusted guides and skilled support technicians trained to help families or individuals connect to and confidently use the internet, find affordable devices, and apply for subsidies to offset the costs for internet services and computer devices. This program has made significant strides towards deleting the digital divide. Through the ACP millions of Americans have been able to maximize educational opportunities, increase telehealth access, stimulate economic growth, and connect with loved ones.

If ACP funding is not renewed, low-cost broadband internet service will become unaffordable for millions of families, resulting in a significant loss of internet connectivity nationwide. This would be a significant step backwards in the progress Congress has made to connect more Americans to the internet through the groundbreaking $42 billion investment in the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program. The ACP has been proven to reduce the subsidy amount needed to incentivize broadband deployment in rural areas by 25 percent per-household. The ACP is necessary to maximize BEAD program dollars intended to build out our nation's broadband

infrastructure and ensure that no community gets left behind. We cannot risk millions of families losing access to the internet service they depend on every day by allowing the ACP to lapse or receive spending cuts.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Office Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations branch to:

1) Send a five-signature letter in support of $6 billion in additional Federal Fiscal Year 2024 funding levels for the Affordable Connectivity Program, to the Chairs of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees with a copy to the County's Congressional Delegation; and

2) Continue to advocate for the development of a permanent funding pathway for this critical broadband program in any government funding package to reflect the President's Fiscal Year 2024 emergency supplemental funding request.

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