



March 8, 2024

San Bernardino County Congressional Delegation

RE: Support for Affordable Connectivity Program

On behalf of the San Bernardino County Council of Governments (SBCOG), I would like to offer the agency's support of prioritizing the renewal of funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP).

The \$14 billion in appropriations provided by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) as well as the ACP, have been a lifeline to connectivity to the more than 14 million enrolled households. The ACP is a significant investment that brings the power of connectivity and economic opportunity to those who do not have access to affordable broadband services. Affordable connectivity adds to the nation's growth and productivity while giving more people career and work options than before. However, if we don't act now, the program's funds are estimated to be depleted by mid-2024, leaving millions of Americans without access to affordable broadband networks.

The program plays a vital role in the lives of Inland Empire families by ensuring that disadvantaged communities in our region can access broadband at affordable rates. Notably, California alone provides 1.9 million households connectivity through the Affordable Connectivity Program; Riverside and San Bernardino Counties are two counties with the highest ACP enrollment rates in the state. A funding lapse could be devastating for more than 271,000 Inland Empire families who rely on this program to retain access to broadband connections. Ultimately, the program provides autonomy and reliability to families by allowing flexibility in selecting technology and an affordable service provider of their choice.

As SBCOG continues the work of supporting San Bernardino County jurisdictions in search of quality of life solutions for residents, we encourage Congress to take proactive steps to fund the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). Extending the ACP program is a crucial public investment that would give millions of low-income families in the Inland Empire access to improved educational opportunities as well as access to the digital economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Dawn M. Rowe'.

Dawn M. Rowe, President
San Bernardino County Transportation Authority