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April 16, 2021

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Senator Bill Dodd
Chair, Senate Governmental Organization Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 584
1020 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for SB 28 (Caballero) Rural Broadband and Digital Infrastructure As Amended 4/5/21

Dear Chair Dodd:

On behalf of the Marin County Board of Supervisors, I write to support SB 28, by Senator Caballero, which would require the state to identify resources that can aid broadband deployment and would reform the Digital Infrastructure Video Competition Act of 2006 (DIVCA).

Inequitable access to broadband is a longstanding issue, but the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on students, workers, small businesses, and everyday life has highlighted just how severe and urgent the disparity is. Rural parts of the state, low density areas, and communities with lower-income residents are the least likely to have access to broadband.

SB 28 would help close the Digital Divide in two ways. First, it would have the state identify resources, such as suitable property, easements, and even spare state-owned conduit, that can aid in deployment. This issue is identified by the California Broadband Council in its recently adopted Broadband for All Action Plan.

Secondly, the bill would make important reforms to DIVCA, which was implemented fifteen years ago and has not been substantively reexamined since, despite changes in technology and business models. Under its terms, cable and telecommunication providers have been able to decide for themselves which services to provide in different areas, even with a single local jurisdiction, instead of negotiating with counties and cities over the terms of service.

As a result, some areas—often those that are already disadvantaged—are left out of broadband service, cutting them off from the job opportunities, business opportunities, telehealth, and even elementary education that requires connection. SB 28 would address this by returning local agencies to a seat at the table in the case of a company that is unwilling to meet

thresholds for expanding services to rural, unserved, and underserved households.

For these reasons, we support Senator Caballero's SB 28, and encourage your "aye" vote when it comes before you and your committee. Thank you for consideration of our position on this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dennis Rodoni". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

Dennis Rodoni, President
Marin County Board of Supervisors

cc: Senator Mike McGuire
Assemblymember Marc Levine
Marin County Board of Supervisors