



MAYOR REX RICHARDSON

November 1, 2023

The Honorable Alex Padilla
United States Senate
112 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Laphonza Butler
United States Senate
G10 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert Garcia
United States House of Representatives
1305 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nanette Barragán
United States House of Representatives
2312 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Extension of the Affordable Connectivity Program

Dear Senators Padilla and Butler, and Representatives Garcia and Barragán:

On behalf of the City of Long Beach (City), I write to respectfully request the extension of funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which provides families with financial assistance for broadband access, to help bridge the digital divide.

The City is committed to advancing digital inclusion, and Long Beach has been a leader in this field. For the past 12 years, Long Beach has been named a Top 10 Digital City by the Center for Digital Government. Furthermore, for the second consecutive year, the City has won first place as the Top Digital City in its population size nationwide. The City has also been awarded the 2022 Digital Inclusion Trailblazer by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance. The City is taking proactive steps to bridge the digital divide in Long Beach by way of its Digital Inclusion Initiative, a blueprint for ensuring that everyone in Long Beach has equitable access and use of computer literacy training, the Internet, technology devices and other digital inclusion programs, resources and services. The City supports legislation and funding that increases the number of households and businesses which have access to low-cost or free high-speed and reliable Internet as well as low-cost or free quality, internet-enabled technology devices and technical support. Through the Long Beach Recovery Act, the city's Digital inclusion Community Outreach program has worked closely with local community-based organizations to share over 14,000 outreach materials, connecting many Long Beach residents to the Affordable Connectivity Program.

The ACP was created by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to help qualifying households reduce the cost of broadband. Eligible households receive up to a \$30 monthly benefit for internet (up to \$75 monthly benefit for households on Tribal lands) and a one-time benefit of up to \$100 off an eligible device. Over 2 million households in California depend on the ACP for affordable internet, including families with children who receive free and reduced-price school lunch and people who receive veterans pension and survivor benefits. In Long Beach, nearly 45,000 households are enrolled in the ACP. However, if Congress does not extend the ACP by mid-2024, over 20 million households are at risk of losing their home internet service.

I support the effort to allocate \$7 billion to continue the ACP through the end of 2024. The ACP is an important tool in closing the digital divide, assisting jobseekers with employment opportunities, and ensuring households get needed medical attention and wellness care through telehealth. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rex Richardson", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Mayor Rex Richardson
City of Long Beach