



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 2023-0186, **Version:** 1

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**To:** Board of Supervisors

**Department or Agency Name(s):** Economic Development Board

**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Rebekah Heinze, 707-565-7152

**Vote Requirement:** 4/5th

**Supervisory District(s):** Countywide

**Title:**

California Public Utilities Commission Grant for Broadband

**Recommended Action:**

- A) Authorize the Economic Development Board department Director, or designee, as the fiscal agent to the North Bay North Coast Broadband Consortium (NBNCBC), to execute the Regional Broadband Consortia Program grant agreement for up to \$600,000 with the California Public Utilities Commission.
- B) Adopt a Resolution adjusting the FY 2022-2023 Economic Development Board department Budget, increasing appropriations for accepted grant funds by \$100,000 for the first year of the three-year grant. (4/5ths vote)

(4/5<sup>th</sup> Vote Required)

**Executive Summary:**

The North Bay North Coast Broadband Consortium (NBNCBC) was formed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2014 to oversee and manage broadband planning activities in the four-county region of Marin, Mendocino, Napa, and Sonoma counties. In 2019, the MOU was extended through an amendment. Since 2014, the NBNCBC has been funded by three grants from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) through the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF): \$250,000 in June 2014, \$260,000 in December 2016, and \$450,000 in October 2019. The most recent grant concluded on October 31, 2022. Recently, the NBNCBC submitted an application for and was awarded a new three-year grant from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). Per the 2014 MOU, the County of Sonoma will act as the fiscal agent.

**Discussion:**

Access to fast, affordable, and reliable broadband is important in today's economy and society. Unfortunately, some rural and urban communities still lack access to broadband due to the high costs of infrastructure deployment, affordability of services, digital literacy, technology access, and other factors.

The North Bay North Coast Broadband Consortium's (NBNCBC or Consortium) past accomplishments include engaging residents, businesses, public agencies, and policymakers regarding the value of broadband infrastructure; carrying wireline speed testing of existing internet service in priority areas and establishing two Countywide Strategic Broadband Plans; and assisting with CASF infrastructure grant proposals, as well as a feasibility study for new middle mile segments.

NBNCBC has been awarded a new three-year grant from the CPUC, totaling \$600,000. Approximately 95% of the grant will be used for activities that will lead to the deployment of programs created under 2021

legislation designed to spur broadband deployment ([SB 156](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220SB156) [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202120220SB156](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220SB156)) and [AB 164](https://ctweb.capitoltrack.com/Bills/21Bills/asm/ab_0151-0200/ab_164_95_C_bill.pdf) [https://ctweb.capitoltrack.com/Bills/21Bills/asm/ab\\_0151-0200/ab\\_164\\_95\\_C\\_bill.pdf](https://ctweb.capitoltrack.com/Bills/21Bills/asm/ab_0151-0200/ab_164_95_C_bill.pdf)). The remaining 5% is allocated as cost recovery for grant management by the County of Sonoma as fiscal agent.

NBNCBC's proposal to the CPUC was centered on ensuring fast, affordable, reliable, and universal broadband infrastructure to its four member counties. Grant funding will help bring broadband services to unserved and underserved areas in its regions. Through the funding, NBNCBC will focus on regional collaboration with member counties' broadband initiatives to create planning strategies for infrastructure, policy, and advocacy. The Consortium will also implement regional activities with management teams from each county with the intent of cross-jurisdictional collaboration to successfully achieve its mission.

NBNCBC representation is composed of an oversight committee made up of four county supervisors: Ted Williams (Mendocino), Dennis Rodoni (Marin), Diane Dillon (Napa) and Chris Coursey (Sonoma), supported by a management team, comprised of staff from each member county.

Economic Development Board department staff and NBNCBC partners are familiar with and have previously complied with grant requirements under the Regional Broadband Consortia Program and related guidelines. Terms and conditions of the proposed grant, including reporting and auditing, have been reviewed and the Consortium Management Team is prepared to undertake the activities funded by the grant.

To accept the grant, the County, as fiscal agent for NBNCBC, will sign the "Consent Form" attached with this Summary.

#### Strategic Plan:

This item directly supports the County's Five-year Strategic Plan and is aligned with the following pillar, goal, and objective.

**Pillar:** Resilient Infrastructure

**Goal:** Goal 4: Seek out grant funding to enhance programs and improve infrastructure

**Objective:** Objective 1: Leverage funding and seek grants to expand communications infrastructure within the community to improve equitable access to broadband, wireless, and cell phone services.

#### Prior Board Actions:

June 11, 2019 - Board approved amended Joint Powers Agreement with Sonoma, Marin, Napa and Mendocino

Counties for NBNCBC grant coordination and authorized application for a Project Plan Grant

December 13, 2016 - Board accepted grant for \$250,000 and approved amended Memorandum of Understanding for the NBNCBC

July 29, 2014 Board accepted California Advance Services Fund grant from the CPUC and approved Memorandum of Understanding for the NBNCBC grant coordination

December 10, 2013 - Board approved a resolution endorsing the County's membership in NBNCBC

#### FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 22-23 Adopted	FY23-24 Projected	FY 24-25 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$200,000

<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

Under the terms of the CPUC grant, the Economic Development Board department will receive \$200,000 per year for three years, beginning in fiscal year 2022-2023. Expenses and revenues for the remainder of FY22-23 are estimated to be \$100,000. Revenues and expenses are expected to be approximately \$200,000 for fiscal years 2023-2024 & 2024-2025 and \$100,000 for fiscal year 2025-2026. Expenses and revenues for future fiscal years will be included in the department's recommended budget.

<b>Staffing Impacts:</b>			
<b>Position Title (Payroll Classification)</b>	<b>Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)</b>	<b>Additions (Number)</b>	<b>Deletions (Number)</b>

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

None

**Attachments:**

1. Consent Form
2. California Public Utilities Commission Resolution T-17778
3. Resolution adjusting the 2022-2023 Adopted Budget
4. NBNBCB Memorandum of Understanding

**Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:**

None