



June 28, 2021

The Honorable Ben Hueso, Chair
Senate Energy, Utilities and Communications Committee
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 14 (Aguiar-Curry): Internet for All Act of 2021 – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Hueso,

Writers Guild of America West, a labor union representing 10,000 professional writers of motion pictures, television, radio and Internet programming, is pleased to support to support AB 14, the Internet for All Act of 2021, which prioritizes the deployment of broadband infrastructure in California's most vulnerable and underserved communities by extending the ongoing collection of funds deposited into the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) to provide communities with grants necessary to bridge the digital divide.

WGAW has long advocated for increased access to affordable, reliable broadband as a means of improving broadband competition and ensuring an open Internet. Broadband availability has supported the growth of streaming video, which in turn has enabled new competition in a consolidated media market, more jobs for writers, and increased visibility for underrepresented voices through independently produced content. As the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted, Americans depend on the Internet for school, remote work, news, access to government services, and entertainment. Reliable and affordable broadband has never been more critical.

AB 14 recognizes that reliable internet connectivity is a basic necessity and that this will remain the case even after this pandemic has subsided. According to California's *Broadband Action Plan 2020*, many Californians still face significant barriers to accessing broadband.¹ Just over two-thirds of rural households in California have access to broadband speeds of at least 25/3mbps, leaving more than 30% of rural Californians lacking access to the broadband speeds required to stream live video while other household members are using the internet for education and work purposes.²

AB 14 is a critical step towards expediting the deployment of broadband infrastructure throughout the state and providing a vital pathway to connect Californians to important services. For these reasons, the Writers Guild is pleased to support AB 14 and respectfully requests your aye vote on this essential legislation.

Sincerely,

Corrina Freedman
Political and Legislative Director

Laura Blum-Smith
Director of Research and Public Policy

cc: Members and Staff, Senate Energy, Utilities and Communications Committee
Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry

¹ California Broadband Council, *Broadband Action Plan 2020, California Broadband for All*, p.7, <https://broadbandcouncil.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/68/2020/12/BB4All-Action-Plan-Final-Draft-v26.pdf>. Published December 2020.

² *Id.* at 8-9.