



April 22, 2021

The Honorable Bill Dodd
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 4032
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Senate Bill 556 (Dodd): California Connectivity Act – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Dodd:

On behalf of the California Retailers Association (CRA), I am writing to express my support for Senate Bill 556 which will bring California into conformance with existing federal and state laws seeking to accelerate the deployment of wireless broadband network infrastructure throughout California.

Demand for reliable, high-speed broadband connectivity has been growing over the years and the COVID-19 pandemic has only highlighted the extent to which broadband access has become essential. People increasingly rely on wireless services for virtually every communication and broadband access need, including telehealth, distance learning and working from home.

Significant barriers to the deployment and expansion of wireless broadband network infrastructure prevent providers from meeting today's greatly expanded wireless demand and building out 5G at scale, exacerbating the digital divide. Although the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted regulations addressing these specific barriers, many cities in California continue to ignore or delay implementing the FCC's regulations. Currently, many local governments in California deny reasonable, nondiscriminatory access to their street light poles and traffic signal poles in the right of way for wireless attachment, impose excessive and non cost-based attachment fees, and fail to process wireless telecommunications facility permits in a timely manner.

SB 556 will conform California law to federal law by requiring local governments to provide reasonable, nondiscriminatory and cost-based access to the street light poles and traffic signal poles that they own in the right of way. The bill also clarifies the cost methodology to be used to determine attachment rates, consistent with existing California law and CPUC regulations that currently apply to similar wireless telecommunications attachments to Publicly Owned Utility (POU) and Investor-Owned Utility (IOU) poles and telephone poles in the right of way. This will close the digital divide and ensure better connectivity for all Californians.

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For these reasons, CRA is pleased to support SB 556 and thanks you for authoring this important measure. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (916) 443-1975 or steve@calretailers.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve McCarthy".

Steve McCarthy
Vice President, Public Policy