

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

DATE: April 8, 2021

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso 
Chief Legislative Analyst

Council File No: 21-0002-S62
Assignment No: 21-04-0272

SUBJECT: Resolution to support AB 34

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Resolution (Blumenfield – Rodriguez) to include in the City’s 2021-2022 State Legislative Program SUPPORT for AB 34 (Muratsuchi), the Broadband for All Act of 2022, which would allow voters to consider a general obligation bond measure on the November 8, 2022 ballot for \$10,000,000,000 in bond funds for projects that deploy broadband infrastructure and broadband services.

SUMMARY

The Resolution (Blumenfield – Rodriguez), introduced on March 3, 2021, states that California could face significant consequences if decisive action is not taken to address its broadband infrastructure, with the goal of providing equitable access to the internet in order to bridge the digital divide. AB 34 (Muratsuchi), the California Broadband for All Act of 2022, would place a general obligation bond measure on the November 2022 ballot, which, if approved, would spur economic development to rebuild the California economy during the state of emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, by funding projects for individuals to work, study, communicate, apply for government services, operate home-based businesses, receive emergency information, and access health care.

AB 34 identifies three long term goals as its focus: availability of high-performance broadband at home, schools, libraries, and businesses; accessibility to affordable broadband and necessary devices; accessibility to training and support to enable digital inclusion. The Resolution therefore requests that the City support AB 34.

BACKGROUND

Upon introduction on December 7, 2020, AB 34 (Muratsuchi) noted that it was the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that would enact the Broadband for All Act of 2022, to become operative only if approved by the voters at the November 8, 2022 statewide general election, to authorize the issuance of state general obligation bonds to fund increased access to broadband services to rural, urban, suburban, and tribal unserved and underserved communities, including to provide funding to close the digital divide faced by too many Californians. AB 34 was amended on March 16, 2021, to provide specific program goals and requirements.

Existing law requires the Department of Technology to improve the governance and implementation of information technology by standardizing reporting relationships, roles, and responsibilities for setting information technology priorities. Existing law requires the Public Utilities Commission to develop, implement, and administer the California Advanced Services Fund program to encourage deployment of high-quality advanced communications services to all Californians.

If approved by voters, the Broadband for All Act of 2022 would support a Broadband for All Program administered by the Department of Technology to provide financial assistance for projects to deploy broadband infrastructure and broadband services. This program would give preference to applications that leverage other private, federal, or local funding or produce the greatest public benefit.

The Broadband for All Program would also give preference to applications that serve unserved or disadvantaged communities, and at least 25 percent of the funds made available by the measure would be allocated for projects serving unserved or disadvantaged communities. Funds awarded pursuant to the program will require 50 percent cost sharing, unless the program directly benefits a disadvantaged community or serves an unserved area.

BILL STATUS

12/07/20	Introduced.
03/11/21	Referred to the Committees on Communications and Conveyance, and Privacy and Consumer Protection.
03/16/21	Amended.
03/17/21	Re-referred to the Committee on Communication and Conveyance.


Tristan Noack
Analyst

SMT:tcjn
Attachment: Resolution

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles, with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state, or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, AB 34 (Muratsuchi), the California Broadband for All Act, introduced on December 7, 2020, would address the digital divide by creating a general obligation bond measure on the November 2022 ballot to fund increased access to broadband services to unserved and underserved communities; and

WHEREAS, California Broadband for All Act would also focus on California's economic recovery from COVID-19 and support public education, telecommuting, telehealth and telemedicine, emergency response and preparedness, and other vital services; and

WHEREAS, disparities associated with inequitable access to internet due to infrastructure failures have become increasingly apparent as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, students living in unserved or underserved areas have not had the ability to access the education to which they are entitled, and parents are unable to access valuable support resources; and

WHEREAS, California could face significant consequences if decisive action is not taken to address its broadband infrastructure, with the goal of providing equitable access to the internet in order to bridge the digital divide; and

WHEREAS, many countries throughout the world have successfully led campaigns to provide high-speed internet to inhabitants, with great success; and

WHEREAS, California should follow suit by putting the matter of improved broadband infrastructure to a vote;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2021-2022 State Legislative Program SUPPORT for AB 34 (Muratsuchi), which would place a general obligation bond measure on the November 2022 ballot to fund increased access to broadband services to rural, urban, suburban, and tribal unserved and underserved communities.



PRESENTED BY:

BOB BLUMENFIELD
Councilmember, 3rd District

SECONDED BY:



MAR 03 2021

tcjn