

SB 743 (BRADFORD): HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS: BROADBAND ADOPTION

POSITION: The Chamber's Sustainability and Industry Committee voted to SUPPORT the bill on April 1, 2021. The Chamber's Public Policy Committee voted to SUPPORT the bill on April 13, 2021. The Board of Directors voted to SUPPORT the bill on April 22, 2021.

RATIONALE: SB 743 authorizes the state to create a grant program that would support broadband access for populations that remain vulnerable to economic swings as demonstrated by the pandemic.

STATUS: SB 743 was introduced by Senator Steven Bradford on February 24, 2021. It has currently passed through the Senate and has been referred to committee in the Assembly.

SUMMARY

SB 743 requires the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to create a grant program to fund broadband adoption and digital literacy for public housing and/or low-income housing developments. Grants would specifically be provided for one-time funds for computer equipment and the establishment of computer labs, or the ongoing funding for up to three years of broadband service and digital literacy programs.

INDUSTRY/IES IMPACTED

SB 743 would impact the broadband, telecommunication, and affordable housing industries.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

SUPPORTERS

- California Cable & Telecommunications Association
- Downtown San Diego Partnership

OPPONENTS

- None known at time of writing

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR

SB 743 invests in solutions to the digital divide by ensuring that at-risk families living in subsidized housing developments are provided access to the internet and have devices available to them. This is a critical step for equity and providing opportunity in an environment when access has never been more important.

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION

State grants for broadband and internet access could create an additional layers of bureaucracy that fail to meet the end goal.