



May 14, 2020

Mr. Randall Stephenson  
Chairman and CEO  
AT&T  
Dallas, Texas 75202

Mr. Brian L. Roberts  
Chairman and CEO  
Comcast NBCUniversal  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103

Mr. Bernard L. Han  
President and CEO  
Frontier Communications  
Norwalk, CT 06851

Mr. Thomas M. Rutledge  
Chairman and CEO  
Charter Communications, Inc.  
Stamford, CT 06901

Mr. Patrick J. Esser  
President and CEO  
Cox Communications, Inc.  
Atlanta, GA 30328

Mr. Mike Sievert  
President and CEO  
T-Mobile USA  
Bellevue, Washington 98006

Dear Mr. Stephenson, Mr. Rutledge, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Esser, Mr. Han and Mr. Sievert,

On behalf of 11 of the largest cities in America's largest state—representing nearly 10 million residents—thank you for stepping up to respond to the COVID-19 crisis by expanding the availability of Internet access. We write to request that you adjust your offerings to ensure that the most digitally-disadvantaged households in California are able to continue their education through distance learning, to sustain remote work, and to receive essential medical care from home.

COVID-19 has exposed and amplified the impact of the Digital Divide on our communities. In California, prior to the onset of the pandemic, 22 percent of the population was unconnected or under-connected to the Internet at home.<sup>1</sup> Since the closure of schools throughout the state, students in 900,000 households are expected to participate in distance learning without Internet connectivity. With unemployment at unprecedented levels, this number is likely even higher today.

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<sup>1</sup> This statistic encompasses the 12% of the population not online at all, and the 10% with cellular connection only. Source: California Emerging Technology Fund

We greatly appreciate that you offer affordable Internet options for low-income households and have provided an interim free Internet service. However, our residents are facing continued economic dislocations and hardships. Thus, we are respectfully requesting that you:

- **Extend the interim free service at least through July 31, 2020** given that remote schooling will continue for many students through the summer, if not longer.
- **Expand program eligibility** by allowing existing customers to take advantage of interim free Internet service, qualifying all families with students at schools with a high percentage of National School Lunch Program-eligible students for affordable Internet offers, and permitting multiple households with the same address to enroll.
- **Remove barriers to enrollment** by screening all prospective customers for affordable Internet program eligibility, increasing staff and language options in call centers, and prohibiting upselling prospective low-income customers.

We are grateful to those of you who have already made some of these changes. Attached are the full recommendations from the California Emerging Technology Fund filed with the California Public Utilities Commission for all ISPs to consider.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our requests. We look forward to continuing the conversation on how to close the Digital Divide together.

Sincerely,

The California Big City Mayors Coalition



**Sam Liccardo**  
Mayor  
City of San José



**Eric Garcetti**  
Mayor  
City of Los Angeles



**London Breed**  
Mayor  
City of San Francisco



**Lee Brand**  
Mayor  
City of Fresno

**Darrell Steinberg**  
Mayor  
City of Sacramento

**Robert Garcia**  
Mayor  
City of Long Beach

**Libby Schaaf**  
Mayor  
City of Oakland

**Harry Sidhu**  
Mayor  
City of Anaheim

**Miguel Pulido**  
Mayor  
City of Santa Ana

**Rusty Bailey**  
Mayor  
City of Riverside

**Michael Tubbs**  
Mayor  
City of Stockton

cc: Governor Gavin Newsom  
Senate President pro Tempore Toni G. Atkins  
Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon  
Sunne Wright McPeak, CEO, California Emerging Technology Fund