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NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

Nevada County Broadband Program Draft Environmental Impact Report California State Clearinghouse No. 2021120435

This notice is hereby given for a 45-day public review period for the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) prepared for the Nevada County Broadband Program (proposed program).

LEAD AGENCY: Nevada County

PROJECT TITLE: Nevada County Broadband Program

PROJECT LOCATION: The program area includes much of Nevada County, located in the Sierra Nevada and foothills, approximately 30 miles northeast of Sacramento at its closest approach. The area in which future broadband projects could be implemented includes unincorporated areas of the county, City of Grass Valley, Nevada City, and Town of Truckee; it excludes federal lands and state highway rights-of-way. Unincorporated areas expected to be served by future broadband projects include the Donner Pass Road area, Kingvale, Soda Springs, Cisco Grove, Washington, Peardale, North San Juan, Chicago Park, Rough and Ready, Penn Valley and other small communities.

PROJECT OVERVIEW: The proposed program would expand access to broadband technology throughout Nevada County and the incorporated communities of Grass Valley, Nevada City, and the Town of Truckee. Installation of fiber optic cable by a variety of potential methods (e.g., undergrounding via directional boring, trenching, and plowing; microtrenching; aerial installation) is evaluated at a programmatic level in the Draft EIR. The program area includes public and private roads and previously disturbed and developed areas. The program includes lateral lines that could be installed between public or private roadways and individual businesses or residences to enable broadband service. The countywide program would install new fiber conduit predominantly underground and, where existing conduit exists, new fiber could be installed in existing conduit. In some circumstances, fiber optic conduit could be installed under roadways where space is limited alongside road shoulders. Access to the new conduits would be provided by installing access boxes along a proposed route for an individual project. Where topography or underground substrate could impede construction of subsurface fiber optic lines, projects would install aboveground fiber optic line that would utilize existing or newly constructed utility poles. The objective of this EIR is to achieve compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act for the program in advance such that individual fiber projects can take advantage of state and federal grant funding programs.

The exact alignments of future broadband projects implemented in accordance with the program are unknown at this time and would be based on such considerations as construction feasibility, local preference, and locations of sensitive environmental resources.

Construction of individual fiber projects under the program could begin as early as spring 2023. In general, for 1 mile of underground fiber optic conduit, boring activities would take an estimated average of 10 days and trenching would take an estimated average of 18-20 days. Implementation of future individual fiber projects under the program would occur over many years. It is possible that multiple,

individual fiber projects could have overlapping construction timeframes. Additionally, any individual segment could involve multiple construction crews working simultaneously, with fiber optic line installation occurring at the same time in different locations of the segment.

SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS: The County has prepared a Draft EIR to address the specific environmental effects of implementing the Nevada County Broadband Program. The Draft EIR consists of an analysis of the following environmental issue areas that may be affected by the proposed program:

- ▶ Aesthetics
- ▶ Archaeological, Historical, and Tribal Cultural Resources
- ▶ Biological Resources
- ▶ Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources
- ▶ Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change
- ▶ Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- ▶ Hydrology and Water Quality
- ▶ Noise
- ▶ Transportation

The Draft EIR identifies significant or potentially significant environmental effects in the areas of archaeological, historical, and tribal cultural resources; biological resources; geology, soils, and mineral resources; hazards and hazardous materials; hydrology and water quality; and noise. All significant or potentially significant environmental effects can be reduced to a less-than-significant level with mitigation. The analysis concludes that the proposed program would not result in significant and unavoidable impacts.

PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD: The Draft EIR is available for review and comment during a 45-day public review period beginning on September 30, 2022. Comments should be submitted on or before November 14, 2022. Written comments may be sent by postal or electronic mail to:

Brian Foss, Planning Director, Nevada County
950 Maidu Avenue, Suite 170
Nevada City, CA 95959
Email: Brian.Foss@nevadacountyca.gov (Subject Line: Broadband Program Draft EIR)

Copies of the Draft EIR: Download the document from:
<https://www.nevadacountyca.gov/994/Environmental-Documents>

Paper copies of the Draft EIR are available for review at the following locations:

Nevada County Planning Department
950 Maidu Avenue, Suite 170
Nevada City, CA 95959

Madelyn Helling Library
980 Helling Way
Nevada City, CA 95959

Grass Valley Library
207 Mill Street
Grass Valley, CA 95945

Truckee Library
10031 Levon Avenue
Truckee, CA 96161

Bear River Library Station
11130 Magnolia Rd
Grass Valley, CA 95949