



May 15, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks  
Chair, Assembly Committee on Appropriations  
1021 O Street, Room 8140  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Support for Assembly Bill 2221 – Streamlining Electric Utility Processing of  
Broadband Permits

Dear Chairwoman Wicks:

The Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband (“SHLB”) Coalition supports Assembly Bill 2221, because the bill will help speed the provision of broadband Internet access to key anchor institutions such as schools, libraries and healthcare providers, in addition to consumers and small businesses.

A national nonprofit organization, SHLB’s mission is to promote open, affordable, high-quality broadband for anchor institutions and their communities. Our members include several schools, libraries, healthcare networks, nonprofit consumer organizations, state broadband offices, state-based research and education networks whose mission is to provide anchor institutions with greater broadband connectivity, as well as some commercial broadband providers that provider services to anchor institutions.

SHLB strongly supports the efforts of the California Legislature to close the digital divide by promoting widespread broadband deployment and affordable service to all parts of the State, including by identifying and removing barriers to investment in broadband infrastructure. The timing of efforts to bring broadband infrastructure to all is critical. Anchor institutions, consumers and small businesses all need Internet access that is fast and reliable enough to support education, telehealth, remote learning and telework. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated how important it is for every community to have fast Internet so that they can access critical applications easily and reliably.

SHLB has filed several comments with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to promote pole and right-of-way policies to accommodate broadband attachments. We believe it is vitally important for state policymakers to address the needs of wireline and wireless service providers for truly non-discriminatory access to poles and rights-of-way, and to provide expedited resolution of pole access disputes. I attach our recent filings at the FCC in WC Docket No. 17-84, which set forth several examples of how delayed or expensive access to poles and rights-of-way can inhibit or frustrate promising broadband projects. These filings also include SHLB’s Pole Attachment Principles to expedite broadband deployment to anchor institutions and their communities.

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SHLB supports AB 2221 because it would require broadband applicants and pole owners to work more closely together under reasonable deadlines on pole attachment requests, a process which SHLB believes will help facilitate broadband access to all.

Thank you very much for allowing SHLB to express our view on this important bill. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly at [jwindhausen@shlb.org](mailto:jwindhausen@shlb.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Windhausen, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

John Windhausen, Jr.  
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Attachment: SHLB Filings in FCC's WC Docket No. 17-84 Accelerating Wireline Broadband Deployment by Removing Barriers to Infrastructure Investment