



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 11, 2024

**GSCA Contact:**  
Carolyn Jhaji  
Communications Director  
916-447-4806  
[cjhaji@rcrcnet.org](mailto:cjhaji@rcrcnet.org)

### **Golden State Connect Authority Included in First Round of Grant Funding Announcements for Rural Broadband Network**

**SACRAMENTO, CA** – On June 7<sup>th</sup> the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) announced the first round of grant award recommendations for the Federal Funding Account (FFA) program to fund last mile broadband infrastructure projects in unserved and underserved communities. Projects in the Golden State Connect Authority (GSCA) member counties of Plumas, Sierra, Imperial, and Lassen are included in this first round, along with the Cities of Oakland and Fremont, the City and County of San Francisco, and the County of Alameda.

In all, 11 grants totaling \$88.6 million are recommended for FFA funding. GSCA's Imperial County Broadband Network project is included in this first round for \$13.8 million, as is Plumas-Sierra Telecommunication's projects in Lassen, Sierra, and Plumas counties. Following approval by the CPUC at their July 11<sup>th</sup> meeting, the funding will be used to deploy broadband infrastructure aimed at increasing access to reliable, affordable high-speed internet.

In September of 2023, GSCA submitted thirty-seven applications to the FFA program, covering proposed broadband project areas in thirty-seven jurisdictions. These areas include thirty GSCA member counties and seven cities, all focused on bridging the digital divide in rural California. All GSCA proposed projects will be open access, last mile, municipal fiber networks thus providing competition among providers, choice for residents and business, and the quality that a fiber-to-the-address network provides. The majority of these applications are still pending before the CPUC, with the commission anticipated to announce additional rounds of awardees on a rolling basis throughout the summer and fall.

"The importance of broadband connectivity cannot be overstated, especially for unserved and underserved residents. Access to high-speed internet is essential for education, healthcare, and economic opportunities," said GSCA Board Chair and Calaveras County Supervisor Jack

Garamendi. "We are grateful to the CPUC for providing this important and substantial investment in our rural communities."

"We are thrilled at the CPUC's recommendation to award grant funds for GSCA's Imperial County Broadband Network project," said Imperial County Supervisor Michael Kelley. "The deployment of broadband and the implementation of this innovative model will have a transformative impact on our community; helping to close the digital divide, foster economic growth, and improve quality of life in Imperial County."

GSCA's applications to the FFA program initially anticipated combining the awarded funds with funding from the State's Loan Loss Reserve program. However, the Governor's May Budget Revise has proposed to cut the program. To ensure the deployment of these projects to the most underserved communities, it is crucial that funding for the Loan Loss Reserve program is preserved.

"GSCA remains committed to its mission of bridging the digital divide in rural California and will continue working towards providing reliable, affordable high-speed internet access to all residents," said GSCA Board Vice Chair and Alpine County Supervisor David Griffith. "This first round of Draft Recommendations for grant funding from the CPUC is a significant step forward in achieving this goal."

For additional information, resources, and updates about GSCA visit [www.goldenstateconnect.org](http://www.goldenstateconnect.org).

#### **ABOUT GOLDEN STATE CONNECT AUTHORITY**

*Golden State Connect Authority (GSCA) is a joint powers authority comprised of 40 rural California counties designed for the purpose of increasing access to reliable, affordable high-speed internet for the residents and businesses of those counties. GSCA will assist rural counties in identifying pathways for development of internet infrastructure within their communities, including the construction of municipal-owned and/or operated internet systems, among other options. Get up to speed with GSCA at [www.goldenstateconnect.org](http://www.goldenstateconnect.org).*

###