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# HB22-1306

## BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT BOARD GRANT PROCESS

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In the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, Colorado was allocated \$170 million to ensure all communities have access to the high-quality modern infrastructure, including broadband, needed to access critical services. Program funds need to be focused on key requirements and encouragements, including: investments in broadband infrastructure and digital connectivity devices, design build standards for broadband infrastructure of 100:100 Mbps symmetrical unless impractical, subrecipients providing broadband services should provide a low-cost option for families in need, encourage networks owned or operated or affiliated with local governments, non-profits and cooperatives, and include information or data on how the community needs will be addressed.

HB22-1306 aligns the Broadband Deployment Board Grants with the requirements of the Treasury Department to get these dollars out the door more quickly, and **not reinvent the wheel** with respect to a Broadband board that has already been debated and decided.

### **CML is requesting the following amendments:**

- **INCREASE** the number of days for the review and comment period to 45 days.
- **ENSURE** that the areas receiving grants are still un- or underserved before approving prior applications that do comply with the new requirements.

As drafted, any previously denied application that fits the new requirements would be automatically funded, without ensuring that the situation remains the same and the area in question is still not adequately being served. We are asking that this is confirmed prior to approving the applications and distributing the funding so projects are not duplicative when resources are needed statewide. Further, the comment period is being reduced from 60 days to 30 days, and CML is advocating for that to be increased to 45 days, as it is sometimes difficult to get all the information and parties together for adequate comment and review. CML supports this legislation with these amendments as it would increase accessibility to \$170 million and increase access to broadband statewide.

Currently, CML is in a **SUPPORT IF AMENDED** position, and we respectfully request your “yes” vote on amendments offered by the Sponsor in the House Transportation and Local Government Committee, as well as your “yes” vote on the bill.