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Liana Bailey-Crimmins, *Director*  
California Department of Technology  
707 3rd Street, 2nd Floor North  
West Sacramento, CA 95605

August 8, 2023

**RE: Prioritize Equity by Reinstating I-580 Middle-Mile Segments to Phase 1**

Dear Director Bailey-Crimmins,

I am writing to express my frustration and deep concern for the planned divestment of approximately \$10.8 million in middle-mile funding from Assembly District (AD) 18, a community I am proud to represent and has historically been unserved with broadband.

First, I want to appreciate the generational investment in broadband infrastructure by Governor Newsom and the state legislature with SB 156 (Chapter 112, Statutes of 2021). In my district, an estimated 94,000 (21.7 percent) Oakland residents, primarily in East and West Oakland, lack internet access due to outdated telecommunication infrastructure, monopolistic markets, and unaffordable rates. With these once-in-a-generation investments, we have the opportunity to achieve Broadband for ALL and ensure that affordable, high-speed internet access is a reality for everyone.

Since the passing of SB 156, my district has had one of the highest levels of engagement, as noted in June by Secretary Tong and yourself at the Oakland Housing Authority Press Conference. However, in a sudden reversal last week, the State recently reduced AD 18's funded network from 44 miles to 20 miles, which at an estimated \$455k per mile, amounts to a \$10.8 million divestment in East Oakland and translate to a proposed network was slashed by approximately 55% (see Appendix A). This divestment from neighborhoods is not an anomaly but a troublesome trend that benefits wealthy suburbs over disadvantaged communities.

**Therefore, I urge you to reinstate the I-580 middle-mile segments to MMBI Network - Phase 1.** The rationale behind this request is as follows:

1. Reinstating this segment in Oakland fulfills the commitment made by GOLDENSTATENET in November of 2021, honoring the two years of ongoing community time, feedback, and support to actualize the original plans.
2. Reinstating the I-580 middle-mile segments to the fully funded phase 1 would reduce the currently proposed 55% broadband cuts to 27%, which more closely aligns to the 17% cuts statewide.
3. This is a logistically feasible request with conduit and fiber currently present along the I-580.
4. The likelihood of phase 2 being fully funded given state finances is exceedingly unlikely. In the event that partial phase 2 funding is identified, the state plans to deprioritize urban segments.

Therefore, absent moving the I-580 segment to phase 1, constituents in this region of my district will remain disconnected.

5. It is my understanding that the decision to move these middle-mile segments to phase 2 was almost entirely based on state broadband maps that rely heavily on unvalidated, self-reported information from Internet Service Providers (ISPs). As these maps are demonstrably inaccurate, we must uncouple funding from these existing maps.

In its current iteration, these maps prioritize demonstrably served communities that already enjoy multiple options for affordable high-speed internet due to decades of private broadband investment. The need for accurate state broadband maps only increases in importance with the upcoming FFA Last Mile Federal Funding Account allocation and other imminent state and federal broadband grants. Reforming these maps begins with working with community members in the areas we know are the least connected, including rural communities, tribal lands, and historically redlined urban areas.

Constituents have alerted me that leases on the middle-mile network could be signed within the next few weeks, so an urgent reply is requested. **Please respond to this letter by Wednesday, August 16 at close of business day on plans to fund the I-580 middle mile segment.** If helpful, my office and our constituents welcome the opportunity to meet with you or your staff to further discuss our concerns and this request. My Chief of Staff, Tomasa Dueñas (916-3199-2018, [tomasa.duenas@asm.ca.gov](mailto:tomasa.duenas@asm.ca.gov)), is point of contact on this matter.

Sincerely,



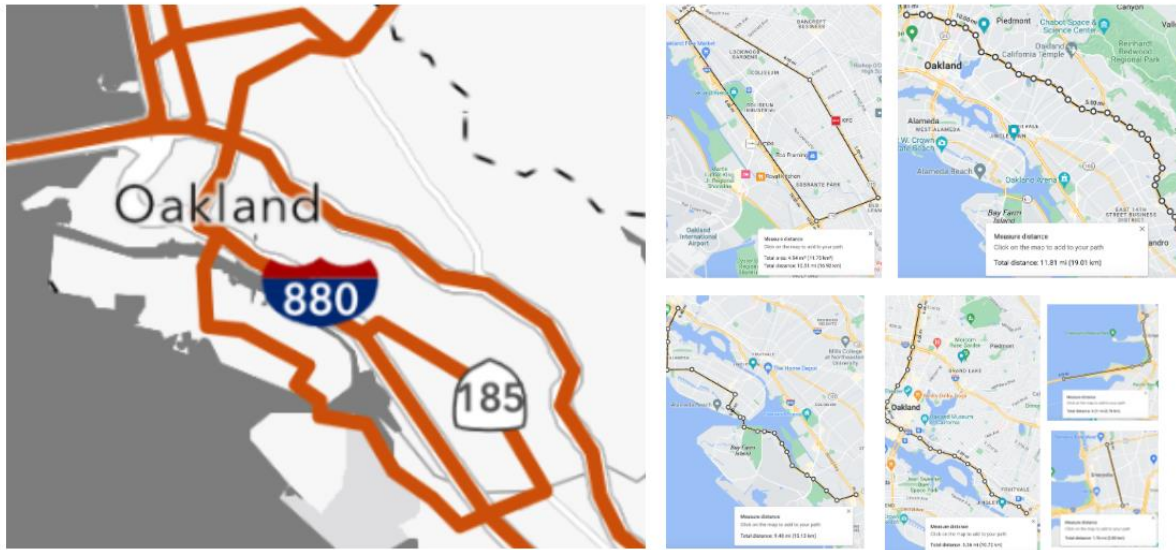
MIA BONTA  
Assemblymember, 18th District

cc: President Reynolds  
Commissioner Shiroma  
Commissioner Houck  
Commissioner Reynolds  
Commissioner Douglas

mtb:td

Appendix A: Middle Mile Plans Before and After "Optimization"

## Before "Optimization" - 44.35 miles (\$20.2M)



## After "Optimization" - 20.64 miles (\$9.4M)

