



**Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG)
Joint Powers Authority Agenda**

STAFF REPORT

To: ESCOG Joint Powers Authority
From: Scott Armstrong, Regional Broadband Coordinator
Subject: Informational Broadband Update
Meeting date: February 26, 2025
Prepared on: February 19, 2025

Attachments: none

The following report provides information and updates associated with regional broadband activities. I would be happy to discuss these topics or any other broadband-related topics in more detail at your convenience.

General Broadband News:

The Inyo-Mono Broadband Consortium (IMBC) website (<https://ConnectedEasternSierra.net/>) includes broadband-related information for residents, businesses, and Internet Service providers in our region. The site also includes a variety of tools, such as a broadband needs estimator, speed tests, service issue reporting options, and several broadband-related maps.

Grants Information:

FFA & Infrastructure Grant (Construction):

CPUC Last-Mile Federal Funding Account (FFA) project grant applications have been awarded to Golden State Connect Authority (GSCA) for project areas in Mono County and the Town of Mammoth Lakes (Convict Lake to McGee Creek, June Lake, and Mammoth and the Lakes Basin in Mono County). Project applications for 6 Counties are still being reviewed, including the FFA project

applications in Inyo County (Aspendell, Starlite, South Lake, Lone Pine, Alabama Hills, and Pearsonville) submitted by Frontier.

The CPUC's [Federal Funding Account Awards and Recommendations](#) page provides a visual depiction of Counties with project applications that have been awarded, but that doesn't mean that all project applications in those Counties have been awarded. There are several project applications that do not connect to the MMBN that have not yet been evaluated, and some project applications overlap, requiring additional evaluation. A full listing of approved FFA and Local Agency Technical Assistance project applications is on the CPUC's [Broadband Portal](#) page.

- FFA Awards and Recommendations: <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/industries-and-topics/internet-and-phone/broadband-implementation-for-california/last-mile-federal-funding-account/federal-funding-account-awards>
- CPU Broadband Portal: <https://broadbandportal.cpuc.ca.gov/>
- CPUC FFA Awards Dashboard: <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/cpuc.broadbandsupport/viz/FederalFundingAccountAwardsDashboard/FFADashboardOriginal>

BEAD (Construction and Digital Equity):

The CPUC published the State's timeline and final eligibility map for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) process. The subgrantee application window opens on March 25 and closes on April 23.

- Bead Program Page: <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/beadprogram/>
- Eligibility Map Page: <https://register.challenge.cpuc.ca.gov/>

USDA BTA 2023 (Technical Assistance only, no construction):

The USDA Broadband Technical Assistance network-design projects for Hammil (Mono County) and Furnace Creek (Inyo County) are in the contract preparation and approval stage.

California Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative (MMBI)

The State's purchase of the California Broadband Cooperative (CBC) Digital 395 network closed on October 31, 2024, and includes a list of rights-of-way and access agreements that are still being processed. The State entered into a Managed Services Agreement with Inyo Networks (Onward) to maintain the network, and the CBC will continue to provide last-mile services to current customers.

High-Level IMBC Metrics

The following are actions-to-date consistent with high-level metrics that are focused on the primary goal of the broadband grants — construction projects that result in broadband Internet service connections:

5 CPUC Federal Funding Account applications submitted (2023):

- Mammoth Lakes (GSCA) – Approved, 2024
- June Lake, Convict Lake to Hilton Creek, and Coleville (GSCA) – Approved, 2024
- Aspendell, Starlite & Bishop Creek area (Frontier) – Pending Approval
- Alabama Hills & Lone Pine (Frontier) – Pending Approval
- Pearsonville (Frontier) – Pending Approval

Developed concise location-specific narratives to be included in future grant applications or to assist providers in selecting feasible broadband expansion projects:

Inyo County (12):

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|-------------------------|------------------|
| • Aberdeen | • Independence |
| • Big Pine | • Keeler |
| • Cartago-Olancho-Grant | • Park Village |
| • Charleston View | • Sandy Valley |
| • Darwin | • Stewart Valley |
| • Deep Springs | • Tecopa |

Mono County (7):

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| • Bridgeport | • Twin Lakes |
| • Cottonwood Canyon | • Virginia Lakes |
| • Hammil | • Walker |
| • Oasis | |

Other Activities:

- Ratified the California Utilities Commission Resolution T-17778 Consent Form accepting California Advanced Services Fund Rural and Urban Regional Broadband Consortia Grant funding for the IMBC.
- IMBC regular updates provided by Scott Armstrong, Regional Broadband Coordinator: 8 presentations and 6 written reports.
- Regular updates to the IMBC website (ConnectedEasternSierra.net).
- There were no broadband construction grant opportunities in 2024.

BUDGET IMPACTS:

None.

LEGAL REVIEW:

Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION:

None, informational only.