

Date of Hearing: March 23, 2022

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND CONVEYANCE

Sharon Quirk-Silva, Chair

AB 2256 (Quirk-Silva) – As Amended March 10, 2022

SUBJECT: Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy: reports

SUMMARY: This bill would add an additional member to the Middle-Mile Advisory Committee (MMAC).

Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires that the additional member be a city, county, or city and county elected government official.
- 2) Provides that the additional member shall be appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly and shall serve at pleasure of the Speaker of the Assembly.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Directs the California Department of Technology's (CDT) Office of Broadband and Digital Literacy (OBDL) to oversee the development and construction of a statewide open-access middle-mile broadband network. This project is known as the Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative (MMBI). (Government Code § 11549.52)
- 2) Requires CDT to establish a broadband advisory committee, known as the MMAC, to monitor the construction and establishment of the statewide open-access middle-mile broadband network. (Government Code § 11549.48 (c)(1))
- 3) Provides that the MMAC shall consist of specified members, including two members each from the Assembly and the Senate. (Government Code § 11549.48 (c)(2))
- 4) Specifies the frequency of the MMAC meetings. (Government Code § 11549.48 (d))

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown.

COMMENTS:

- 1) *The Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative.* In July 2021, the Legislature passed and Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law Senate Bill (SB) 156 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, Chapter 112, Statutes of 2021) to create an open-access middle-mile network to support the expansion of high-speed broadband service to Californians. SB 156 provides \$3.25 billion to build the MMBI, which is funded entirely from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding that must be encumbered by December 2024. The ARPA expenditures must be liquidated, and the project completed by December 2026. The \$3.25 billion in ARPA funding is estimated to be enough to build approximately 6,000 miles of the proposed 8,100-mile system.
- 2) *Roles and Responsibilities of the Middle-Mile Advisory Committee.* Per SB 156, the purpose of the MMAC is to monitor the construction and establishment of the statewide open-access

middle-mile broadband network. The project's third-party administrator is also required to seek policy advice from the MMAC. The MMAC currently meets monthly through June 2022 and will meet quarterly thereafter. Although some of the state agencies represented on the MMAC, such as CDT and CPUC, have particular roles and responsibilities that are outlined in existing law, the MMAC itself is a non-voting body with only an advisory role.

- 3) *There is a need to partner with local governments.* During MMAC meetings a range of updates and information regarding the MMBI project is discussed by the committee members and shared with the public. For example, local planning and permitting has been identified as a potential obstacle to expeditiously constructing the MMBI project. Having a member of the MMAC with local government experience, as proposed by this bill, can provide valuable insight that could benefit the management of the project.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California State Association of Counties (Co-Sponsor)
Monterey County Board of Supervisors
Monterey; County of (Co-Sponsor)

Opposition

None on file

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