



September 7, 2006

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor, State of California
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

**SUBJECT: Senate Bill 909 (Bowen) – Broadband Services
REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE**

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

The California Community Technology Policy Group (CCTPG) urges you to sign Senate Bill 909 (Bowen). This bill would make affordable the connection to a high-speed Internet network for community technology programs. This bill has been introduced to correct a problem that occurred with the implementation of Chapter 531 of the Statutes of 2003 (Senate Bill 720).

CCTPG is a statewide organization that consists of over 200 nonprofit organizations, representing after-school, employment training, community development, health care, housing, youth development, adult education, and other organizations that have integrated technology access and training into their programs, or are using technology in innovative ways to accomplish their missions.

SB 909 will address a problem that occurred with the interpretation of SB 720, which intended to increase the capacity of community technology programs to serve their local communities through broadband technologies. Approximately, three million dollars was set aside in the initial legislation to discount network installation costs; however, due to the unintentional restrictiveness of the language, the intended users have not been able to sufficiently utilize the funds. Of the three million dollars set aside, only about one hundred thousand dollars has been allocated despite a need for these funds by community technology programs that aid communities with little or no access to technology. There are no new funds in the measure, just language to assure the funds can be distributed as originally intended. The current Budget Act of 2006-07 re-appropriated these funds. Since these are special funds, they can only be used within the context of the CTF. CTF funds are derived from a surcharge on the phone bill of 0.13%. This amounts to an average of five cents per month on the average phone bill. These funds have already been collected. The problem is they cannot be used for their intended purpose due to a drafting error in the original legislation. If the legislation is not enacted, these funds will remain unspent until 2008 and then can only revert to the CTF.

SB 909 captures the original intent of SB 720. SB 909 will reduce the burden on community-based organization funded by the California Teleconnect Fund and allow them to provide enhanced services to their constituents. For these reasons, we urge you to sign SB 909 (Bowen) into law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Chabrán".

Richard Chabrán, Chair
California Community Technology Policy Group