

Assembly Bill 286 – Broadband Infrastructure Mapping

Assemblymember Jim Wood

THE PROBLEM

Current broadband maps express broadband access at the census-block level, despite the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) broadband maps expressing broadband access at the address level. These maps, which are created and maintained by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) gather feedback, but do not incorporate that data into the publicly available maps.

BACKGROUND

Currently, publicly available broadband maps fail to illustrate fully the digital divide preventing millions of Californians from receiving broadband. Maps today are painted with a broad brush of served versus unserved with no detail regarding what might be keeping a household offline. Today's maps only reflect where Internet Service Providers (ISPs) have the capacity to serve an address, essentially serving as a one-dimensional map that provides no context as to why a household remains offline.

Unfortunately, existing providers have an incentive to overrepresent the depth and breadth of their service territory. It is no secret that the vast maps of coverage sometimes miss the nuances of broadband adoption when they are depicted in the aggregate census-block level. Whether it is dense forest in rural California or 'digital doughnuts' in urban California, we know Californians are not fully represented in our broadband maps today. Our current broadband maps allow providers that have the most to gain to submit data without challenge—essentially a government process without an opportunity for public comment.

Maps maintained by the CPUC need to accommodate features that ensure that public can accurately provide feedback. Urban or rural, we know that the maps today do not capture the experience felt by those struggling with the digital divide.

BILL SUMMARY

AB 286 builds on previous efforts, specifically AB 41 (Wood, Chaptered 2021) and AB 2752 (Wood, Chaptered 2022), to improve broadband mapping resources and efforts in California. This bill would do this by updating and overlaying data already collected by the CPUC on the [California Interactive Map](#). In addition, AB 286 would ensure that publicly available maps express data at the address level which would align with the FCC's [National Broadband Map](#).

STATUS

Introduced

SUPPORT

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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