



Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative

Middle-Mile Advisory Committee Meeting

May 28, 2025

Minutes and Transcript

The Middle-Mile Advisory Committee met on Wednesday at 2:00pm PST via virtual conference and in-person.

Agenda Item 1: Welcome

Chair Bailey-Crimmins welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced new members, Senator Caballero, Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry and Secretary Maduros.

Chair Bailey-Crimmins welcomed and thanked all MMAC members, designees, presenters and attendees.

A quorum for the meeting was established.

Member		Designee	Present	Absent
California Department of Technology	CIO & Directorate Bailey-Crimmins		X	
California Public Utilities Commission	President Reynolds	Michael Mullany	X	
Department of Finance	Chief Deputy Director Perrault		X	
Government Operations Agency	Secretary Maduros	Luis Larios	X	
Department of Transportation	Director Tavares	Chief Deputy Director Kever	X	

State Senate	Senator Gonzalez			X
State Senate	Senator Caballero			X
State Assembly	Assembly Member Tasha Boerner		X	
State Assembly	Assembly Member Aguiar-Curry		X	
County of Monterey, District 1	Supervisor Alejo			X
County of Del Norte, District 2	Valerie Starkey		X	

Agenda Item 2: Project Status Chart

[CDT](#)

Mark Monroe provided an MMBI update summary:

- **RFI² partners** now handle **96%** of MMBI construction, covering nearly **7,900 miles**.
- Shift from Caltrans-led builds was driven by cost-saving benefits of shared construction.
- To meet the **Dec 2026 completion goal, all right-of-way permits must be issued by Dec 2025**.
- **Permitting progress:**
 - 1,900 miles submitted
 - 1,400 miles in Caltrans functional review
 - 400 miles permitted
- **Construction status:**
 - 1,200 miles (off Caltrans ROW) and ~277 miles (on ROW) completed
 - 4,160 miles in design or pre-construction
- Full broadband delivery also depends on infrastructure, electronics, and network integration.

Agenda Item 3: Project Updates

[Caltrans](#)

Elias Karam gave an update on NEPA & Permitting:

- Caltrans is streamlining **NEPA compliance** to accelerate encroachment permit approvals for CDT partner builds.
- A new “**Alternate Path**” allows CDT partners to **self-certify environmental compliance**, except for:
 - **Section 106** (historic preservation)
 - **Section 7** (endangered species)
- Caltrans retains responsibility for tribal coordination and external consultations (e.g., SHPO, U.S. Fish & Wildlife).
- Partners can either:
 - Use the **Alternate Path** with a checklist for self-certification, or
 - Follow the **traditional method** with full technical studies.
- Rolled out on **May 9th**; weekly support meetings are ongoing.
- **11 categorical exclusions** have already been issued or are expected soon, signaling faster permit progress.

Janice Benton gave an update on Encroachment Permits:

- **Permit Volume & Status:**
 - CDT expects ~3,497 miles on state highway right-of-way.
 - Caltrans has received **1,921 miles** of applications:
 - **480 miles** in intake screening
 - **1,006 miles** in functional review
 - **429 miles** issued
 - **6 miles** completed and closed
- **Process Improvements:**
 - Caltrans is **accepting incomplete applications** to start coordination early — a shift from the standard process.
 - Introduced **multiple permitting paths**:
 - **QMAP** (for complex projects, direct district collaboration)
 - **Hybrid approach** (incomplete apps + district support)
 - **Alternate NEPA path** (self-certification)
- **Support & Coordination:**
 - **One-on-one “concierge” support** from Caltrans district staff
 - Weekly HQ-district meetings to track progress and share lessons learned
 - **Dedicated email** and **strike team** of subject matter experts for ongoing support
- **Expedited Permitting:**
 - Caltrans is **not requiring other agency permits** before issuing its own — to speed up approvals.

- **Overall Message:**

- Caltrans is prioritizing every MMBN permit, adapting processes, and collaborating closely with CDT partners to meet state broadband goals.

Agenda Item 4: MMBI Construction Partners

American Dark Fiber (ADF)

Dave Daigle & Zack Baayen with American Dark Fiber (ADF) shared their presentation:

Company Overview:

- ADF is a Competitive Local Exchange Carrier (CELC) licensed by CPUC and FCC.
- Founded in 2017; specializes in dark fiber builds.
- Contracted for ~900 total miles under MMBI through RFI:
 - 400 miles (awarded Aug 2023)
 - 500 miles (awarded Apr 2025)

Phase 1 (Aug 2023 | 400 miles):

- 117 miles construction complete
- 86 miles fiber placed
- 269 permits received (Caltrans, city, utility, etc.)
- 213 miles still awaiting permits
- Construction started August 2023, pending permits on 2 routes

Phase 2 (Apr 2025 | 500 miles):

- In design phase; no construction started yet
- Estimated 130 miles excavation, 195 miles traffic control in Caltrans ROW
- Need permits by Feb 2026 to meet build deadline

Feedback:

- Permit Delays:
 - Pre-MMBI: Caltrans permits took ~30 days
 - Post-MMBI: Now average ~120 days and counting
 - Transition to CEPS and added agreement requirements (MLAs, SLAs) caused 7–8 months of delays
- NEPA Complexities:
 - Previously not required for minor work like pole attachments

- Now required for many low-impact activities, adding unnecessary cost and time
- Want Caltrans to advocate for exemptions or lead NEPA coordination for CELC-class builders
- Federal Permits:
 - BLM permits taking 270+ days; request state help coordinating with federal agencies

Key Requests:

- Revert to pre-MMBI Caltrans permit process for CELCs
- Streamlined NEPA handling, especially for minor urban/suburban builds
- Use of Caltrans' own studies where possible
- State-led coordination with federal agencies (e.g., BLM) to accelerate permitting

[Arcadian](#)

Dan Davis, with Arcadian, shared his presentation:

Company Overview:

- Founded in 2018 to build long-haul/middle-mile fiber networks.
- Operates at scale, connecting major data centers (e.g., LA to Phoenix).
- MMBI's 1,000-mile California segment aligns with Arcadian's larger 3,500-mile network plan (CO to CA).

Project Scope & Progress:

- 1,000 miles contracted with California (~90% in Caltrans ROW).
- Only 3 permits for 4 miles have been issued to date.
- Arcadian expects a "tsunami" of permits needed by Aug–Sept 2025 to stay on track for 2026 deadlines.
- Full digitization of project management allows precise tracking of every mile and permitting status.
- Has completed 4 groundbreaking events to build momentum.

Feedback:

- 57 permitting agencies involved (Caltrans + 7 federal + 50 local/state) — all must align for project continuity.
- Permit delays and inconsistencies due to changing processes:
 - Shift from QMAP → CEPS → new permitting standards (3 iterations in 3 years).

- Uneven SB 156 (CEQA exemption) interpretation across Caltrans districts — leads to re-litigating issues multiple times.
- Federal permitting (e.g., BLM) takes 18–30 months — calls for unified state-federal coordination.

Key Requests:

- Leadership from Caltrans HQ to unify interpretation and guidance across districts.
- Top-down written standards to avoid repetitive district-level delays.
- Streamlined permitting rules, particularly for handholes, pavement, trenching, etc.
- Prioritize environmental reviews and clarify CEQA exemption application under SB 156.
- Collaborative scheduling with Caltrans to manage traffic impacts from simultaneous construction across 4,000 miles.

[Central Valley Independent Network \(CVIN\)](#)

Mike Stewart, with CVIN shared his presentation:

Company Overview:

- Established in 1996; holds a CPCN as a certificated telephone company.
- Operates ~3,000 miles of network across 28 California counties.
- Successfully built 1,400+ miles under the 2010 BTOP grant, including 300 miles in Caltrans ROW.

Project Role:

- Leasing 2,700 miles of existing fiber to CDT — not a joint-build partner.
- Total project:
 - 1,450 miles in Caltrans ROW
 - 1,261 miles off Caltrans ROW
 - 830+ miles off Caltrans already permitted or under construction

Permitting Complexities:

- 18-month delay due to Caltrans requiring inappropriate agreements (e.g., QMAP, MLAs, SLAs) despite CVIN's public utility status.
- Requirements were lifted in Feb 2025, leading to a surge in applications.
- Significant inconsistencies in Caltrans district permit requirements, especially for minor work like vault replacements.

Key Requests:

- Limit Caltrans review to ROW safety (e.g., bridges, culverts) — not utility engineering details.

- Affirm CEQA/NEPA exemptions for utility broadband work.
 - Dispute NEPA applicability when no federal action is present.
- Standardize guidance across districts — avoid conflicting interpretations.
- Allow field flexibility to adjust routes onsite without requiring permit revisions.
- Permit volume milestones needed:
 - 150–200 miles/month starting now,
 - All permits by Dec 2025 to meet Dec 2026 completion deadline.

[Hoopa Valley Public Utilities District \(HVPUD\)](#)

Linnea Jackson, with HVPUD shared her presentation:

Project Overview:

- 23 miles along State Highway 96 (Willow Creek to Yurok border)
- Challenging terrain: steep cliffs, rivers, and narrow corridors
- Contractor: Glass Roots Construction (local experience)

Progress:

- Joint Build agreement signed (Aug 2023)
- Two-party agreement delayed until June 2024 (now rescinded)
- Encroachment permit received
- Construction to begin June 2025
- CEQA and NEPA categorical exemptions obtained (includes mitigation for species like the Northern Pond Turtle)
- Pre-construction activities and a groundbreaking ceremony are planned

Complexities:

- Ever-changing requirements (QMAP, CEPS, insurance obligations, process changes)
- Lack of tribal-specific processes:
 - Required sovereign immunity waivers, complex insurance policies
 - Inconsistent treatment across jurisdictions
 - Need for TIPO and tribal government consultation for cultural/environmental reviews

Key Requests:

- Small builds like Hoopa's are critical to statewide connectivity, especially in underserved tribal and rural regions
- Calls for policy adjustments to support tribal nations:
 - Streamlined permitting
 - Clear, consistent rules
 - Greater flexibility for tribal sovereignty and field adaptations
- Hoopa Tribe is committed to meeting deadlines and managing long-term network operations

Siskiyou Telephone

Russ Elliott, with Siskiyou Telephone shared his presentation:

Company Overview:

- Siskiyou Telephone is a 130-year-old rural ILEC, with 83% fiber-to-the-home coverage, even in areas with no commercial power.
- Elliott brings public policy experience from previous roles setting up broadband offices in Washington and Wyoming.
- Emphasized the importance of local providers in delivering reliable service, jobs, and community investment.

Project Scope:

- 163 total miles (90 miles on Caltrans ROW, 73 miles off)
- 76 miles are existing infrastructure; remaining are new build
- Construction for existing miles to complete by October 2025

Complexities:

- Early progress was slowed by:
 - Delayed Caltrans engagement (required a \$500k deposit to begin)
 - Changing processes (QMAP, CEPS)
 - Unexpected permitting for existing infrastructure
- Environmental delays, especially a 1.8-mile BLM section, triggered full environmental assessments, missing seasonal windows for necessary studies.
- Warned of tight weather-constrained construction timelines — only 10–12 months per year due to snow and mountains.
- Previously efficient Caltrans permit process (~30–60 days) has become more complex and slower under MMBI.
- New requirements (e.g., licensed surveys every 50 feet, added inspection roles) are adding significant cost and delaying both MMBI and internal projects.
- Urged Caltrans to:
 - Return to pre-MMBI permitting standards
 - Provide faster and written guidance
 - Allow separation of segments to move forward without full-route delays

Key Requests:

- Permit deadline: July 2025 — critical to meet the December 2026 build deadline
- Expressed frustration over added costs without additional funding

- Noted recent improvement in Caltrans responsiveness (e.g., one-on-one meetings, better collaboration)
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- Environmental delays, especially a 1.8-mile BLM section, triggered full environmental assessments, missing seasonal windows for necessary studies.
- Warned of tight weather-constrained construction timelines — only 10–12 months per year due to snow and mountains.

[Los Angeles Bureau of Street Lighting \(BSL\)](#)

Dan Caroselli, with the Los Angeles Bureau of Street Lighting, shared his presentation:

Company Overview:

- Over 100 years of experience digging underground conduit for street lighting
- Currently manages 9,000+ miles of underground electrical conduit and 200,000 poles, many used for 5G co-location
- Transition to fiber conduit (HDPE, 4-inch) is a natural operational fit

Project Scope:

- 13.3 miles of fiber conduit along the 110 corridor in South LA
- Entirely within City of LA right-of-way
- Serving an area with one of the highest rates of disconnected households in the state

Project Status:

- Groundbreaking has begun; <0.5 miles completed so far
- Potholing and utility location work ongoing since March
- Most permits not required, but some needed for crossings and underpasses (in progress)
- Projected completion: Dec 2026, with potential for early finish

Success Factors:

- Established right-of-way access with minimal need for traffic disruption
- Use of trenchless, longitudinal boring methods
- Permanent, trained city workforce and local equipment storage
- Close collaboration with other city departments

Key Requests:

- Continued coordination with local and county agencies

- Possible state coordination for limited crossings (e.g., near the 105 freeway), though unlikely to impact scope
- Commitment to community sensitivity during construction in dense urban areas

Yurok Telecommunications

Jon Walton, with Yurok Telecommunications, shared his presentation:

Company Overview:

- Yurok Telecommunications, wholly owned by the Yurok Tribe.

Project Scope: ~

- 50 miles of critical middle mile fiber in Northern California's Lost Coast region
- Project connects remote tribal areas with limited existing infrastructure, in highly sensitive and geologically difficult terrain.
- Though small in mileage, the segment is vital for regional connectivity (along Hwy 101 and 96).
- Yurok Telecom is also simultaneously managing NTIA, CPUC, and private tribal builds.

Permitting & Process Challenges:

- 20+ months to secure Caltrans permits — much longer than in other states (e.g., 2–4 months in WA or KS).
- NEPA took 14 months (due to federal funding involvement).
- Caltrans process was the slowest and most difficult, especially early on.
- Had to redesign bridge attachments 3 times due to inconsistent guidance.
- Weekly meetings with DOT consumed time and funds, with delays impacting budgets.
- A new late-stage surveying requirement could cause a 3-month delay and cost \$500,000 — a serious issue for a small grant-funded project.
- Concerned this may be a sign of broader problems as construction accelerates statewide.

Recent Success:

- Permit now secured, thanks to support from District 1 staff and CDT.

Key Requests:

- Need urgency and consistency in guidance to avoid cost overruns and schedule impacts.

Agenda Item 6: Stakeholder Engagement

[CDI](#)

Monica Hernandez gave an update on Stakeholder Engagement efforts:

- Expressed optimism for more groundbreaking events in the coming months.
 - Shared a slide with upcoming events and noted updates will be communicated to MMAC members.

Agenda Item 6: Public Comment

Public comments were made by:

- Ben Hulet, Sierra Nevada Communications
- Mike Ghilotti, Ghilotti Brothers

Questions were raised about the outcomes would from this MMAC meeting—specifically whether a revised plan or streamlined directive would be issued to Caltrans, and when. Another comment was made in regards to cancellation of project contracts and awarding bids.

Members Final Comments

Mike Keever, Acting Director of Caltrans, closed by affirming Caltrans' commitment to completing the broadband network in partnership with all stakeholders. He acknowledged the shared challenges—particularly around environmental reviews—and expressed support for a more solution-oriented approach. Keever emphasized the need to balance timely delivery with environmental and cultural stewardship and stated that Caltrans is actively reviewing feedback to make smarter, risk-informed decisions. He expressed optimism that the permitting process will improve and lead to more visible progress in the near future

Closing Remarks

Chair Bailey-Crimmins thanked everyone for their attendance and participation. The Q3 MMAC meeting will be Friday, July 18th from 10am – 12pm. The meeting adjourned at 4:55pm.

Transcript

The Chair: All right, good afternoon, everyone and welcome to the May 28th, 2025, Ad Hoc Middle Mile Advisory Committee. At the April Middle Mile Advisory Committee, we heard from the advisory committee members of the desire to hear directly from our partners and discuss their successes to date since many of them have been with us several years and opportunities that both the state and they share in meeting the December 2026 deadline. As a reminder, our goal is broadband for all and when we talk about December 2026, it means that the network is completely operational and benefiting last-mile communities and households. Today, you will hear a brief comment from our members. Updates from California Department of Technology. Caltrans, followed by over about an hour and 15 minutes of dedicated to our MMBI partners, there are seven both virtually and in the room. And then we'll have public comment. Due to the amount of interest in this particular ad hoc, we will probably go about two and a half hours so just letting you might have some members trading out every once in a while, because of other business that they're attending. The first order of business is roll call, so Ms. Alvarado, if you please would do roll call and discuss housekeeping items.

Alicia Alvarado: Thank you. Housekeeping rule statement. Attendees, please note there is time allocated at the end of the meeting for public comment. Presenters, please cue Sam to advance your slides. Virtual presenters, please turn on your camera when called upon to present. And committee members, please use the raise your hand feature on Zoom to cue the chair to call on you to speak. For our partners, there will be 7 minutes for presentation, and 7 minutes for Q&A after each of your presentations. Now committee member roll call. Chair Bailey Crimmins?

The Chair: Here.

Alicia Alvarado: Secretary Maduro's?

Luis Larios: Luis Larios on behalf of Secretary Maduro's.

Alicia Alvarado: President Reynolds.

Michael Mullaney: Michael Mullaney on behalf of President Reynolds.

Alicia Alvarado: Chief Deputy Director Perrault.

Director Perrault: Present.

Alicia Alvarado: Director Tavares.

Mike Kever: Mike Kever, Acting Director Caltrans.

Alicia Alvarado: Senator Gonzalez. Senator Caballero. Assembly member Boerner. Assembly member Aguiar-Curry. Supervisor Alejo. Supervisor Starkey.

Supervisor Starkey: I am here.

Alicia Alvarado: Madam Chair, we have a quorum.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Alvarado. Before we begin, I'd like to ask, are there any advisory members that would like to make a comment before we begin the first agenda item? I see none, so we will go ahead and turn it over to Mr. Mark Monroe, who will be the opening for agenda item number one.

Mark Monroe: All right, thank you. Good afternoon, Chair and members. Mark Monroe, Deputy Director for the Middle Mile Broadband Initiative at CDT. Normally, as has been noted, these MMAC meetings include a broader status update for each of the state business partners. However, the RFI Squared partners are a vital component of the state's success with the MMBI program providing almost 7,900 miles of the network. And as been noted, our last quarterly MMAC meeting in April it's important to hear directly from the RFI Squared partners, particularly as it relates to permitting and construction. So, today's MMAC will be focused on hearing directly from CDT, Caltrans and the state's joint build partners regarding the permitting and construction efforts. We want to jump to the next slide. This slide provides a high-level timeline reflecting how the project has developed from primarily Caltrans construction in the second quarter of 2022 to now being about 96% RFI squared construction. Both CDT and Caltrans have had to adapt to our processes as part of the state's effort to help make the MMBI project successful, including CDT with its RFI squared efforts, and Caltrans with its permitting processes. Here we can see that due to the cost of standalone construction, CDT converted most of the miles to RFI Squared partnerships to benefit from shared construction costs. And it's also important to note that the RFI Squared partners are indicating they'll need all of their on-right-of-way miles permitted on a rolling basis over this next calendar year but by the end of December of 2025, in order to meet the December 2026 completion deadline. Next slide. So, this is just to serve as a helpful reminder that while we are currently focused on the permitting stage of the project, more broadly, there are a number of other steps and dependencies that will also be required before MMBI can provide broadband

connections to communities. We can see here that when it comes to permitting it's the two orange boxes that we're talking about. All of these other things not only construction of fiber and huts, but installation and testing of electronics, construction of utility infrastructure, and connection of the MMBI network back to the data exchanges that connect the communities back to the web. Must all be completed to provide connectivity to communities by December of 2026. Can we jump to the next slide? All right, here we can get a quick high-level quarterly look at the cumulative number of permit miles submitted by partners which are in Caltrans intake screening process. Miles accepted into Caltrans functional review stage, or the miles issued by Caltrans. And Caltrans will be talking more about this in detail next. Here we can see that to date partners have submitted encroachment permit applications for about 1,900 miles, of which 1,400 miles have passed to Caltrans functional review stage as having the correct complement of materials that Caltrans can now begin reviewing. Of those 1,400 miles, over 400 miles of encroachment permits have been issued by Caltrans. And again, Caltrans, will be talking more about this later. If we can jump to the next slide. So this slide shows the progress on the almost 7,900 RFI squared miles. The blue reflects the RFI squared miles that are off Caltrans right away and the orange reflects the RFI squared models that are on Caltrans right away. We can see that about 1,660 mile of off Caltrans right-of-way are still in design and permitting, and about 2,500 miles on Caltrans right away are in the pre-construction stage. Next we can see that the miles that have been permitted on and off Caltrans right away. And then lastly, we can see that RFI Squared partners have completed installation of fiber and conduit on just over 1,200 miles off Caltrans right away and have completed installation in another 277 miles on Caltrans right away. I'll also note that striped section on the last orange bar, where we include purchased miles, or miles that were permitted really before there was a formal MMBI. And that ends my update this morning.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Monroe. Are there any advisory members that have questions for Mr. Monroe? I'm going to ask one question. Mr. Monroe there was a slide that you were saying that all of the different pieces and LEGO pieces have to kind of come together for a last-mile communities, as we talk about iterative maybe explain to the public and to the members when would the network be viable. It's not like everything has to be in place, in order for households to have internet. So maybe just explaining that would be very helpful.

Mark Monroe: Yeah, sure. So, we look at the MMBI network, first of all, there's a component of it a large component of it which is really the backbone and that's going to serve as the framework for that network and that's what we'll

connect back to the data centers in San Jose and Los Angeles. So, as we move forward that's part of our focus is to make sure that we have those connections. Obviously, if we can build a section if it doesn't connect back to a data center, it doesn't do anything, and so we're really focused on making sure that as we build this out, we're doing so in a thoughtful way that provides connectivity. When we look at being able to light up sections of the network, we're still hoping for something in the July timeframe, July of 2026, we hope to have an operator on board then and be able to start connecting to FFA grant awardees as well as others.

The Chair: Thank you, appreciate the answer. All right. I see no other questions from any other members, so we'll go ahead and go to Agenda item number 2, which is Caltrans. We have Elias Karam and Janice Benton.

Elias Karam: Thank you. Good afternoon, Chair Bailey-Crimmins, committee members, CDT partners, and others from the public my name is Elias Karam. I am the Assistant Deputy Director over the Middle Mile Broadband Initiative for Caltrans. And I will be providing an update on the progress Caltrans has been making since we met for the last MMAC on April 18th. Next slide, please. Today, we will share our recent progress in issuing encroachment permits to support CDT with their partner builds. Caltrans heard CDT partners' concerns and modified its approach to allow for streamlining opportunities to satisfy environmental compliance and accelerate their path to construction. Next slide, please. Based on the feedback from the CDT partner engagements, Caltrans began developing an alternate path for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, also known as NEPA. NEPA compliance is required before an encroachment permit can be issued. This means that federal approval is required for encroachment permits to allow CDT partners utility installations and related activities performed within the states right away. CDT partners are benefiting from the Caltrans NEPA assignment through a Caltrans MOU with FHWA, along with the programmatic options available for MMBN partners. Through this delegated authority to make categorical exclusion determinations under NEPA, Caltrans has developed an alternate path for CDT partners to facilitate a timelier attainment for environmental compliance. During the development of the alternate path, Caltrans sought to differentiate the environmental requirements in which CDT partners can self-certify to demonstrate no unusual circumstances exist. And those in which Caltrans cannot delegate the responsibility to private entities. Responsibilities that cannot be delegated include those under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Section 7 of the Federal Endangered Species Act. To determine whether a NEPA categorical exclusion is appropriate, CDT partners must provide Section 106 and Section 7 supporting technical

documents for Caltrans review. Additionally, external consultations may be required with entities such as the State Historic Preservation Officer, also known as SHPO, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as Native American tribes. Caltrans remains committed to respecting the sovereignty of over 100 federally recognized tribes in California. As part of this delegated authority, Caltrans is required to take the lead on this coordination. Under the Alternate Path Self-Certification option, CDT partners confirmed that they have met compliance for all other disciplines outside of Section 106 and Section 7 by checking applicable boxes on the alternate path checklist without submitting separate technical documents or reports for Caltrans review. The alternate path option was introduced to CDT partners during an MMBI summit held on May 9th and the strike team continues to hold weekly meetings to address any questions. Additionally, Caltrans districts continue to share any available technical studies, provided that the miles for their projects have been submitted through the Caltrans encroachment permit system. Moving forward CDT partners have the option to follow the alternate path of self-certification or utilize the typical practice of submitting copies of all required technical studies to Caltrans. Since its rollout, CDT partners have begun applying the alternate path and Caltrans has since either issued or is expecting to issue 11 categorical exclusions within the coming week. The hope is that with the inception of the alternate path option, Caltrans will see an increase in encroachment permit issuances for CDT Partners Construction Builds. At this time, I would like to introduce my colleague, Janice Benton, to further discuss the status of CDT partner encroachment permits.

Janice Benton: All right, thank you, Mr. Karam. So, good afternoon, Chair Bailey-Crimmins, committee members, and others from the public. I am Janice Benton, and I am the Deputy Director for our Maintenance and Operations at Caltrans. My programs include encroachment permits which falls within our Division of Traffic Operations. I will be providing an update on the status of our encroachment permits today. Next slide, please. To begin, I would like to provide a high-level summary of encroachment permit applications Caltrans has received for the middle mile broadband network and their current status. As we have collaborated with CDT on the partner builds, CDT has indicated that they anticipate approximately 3,497 miles of the middle-mile broadband network that'll be installed along the state highway right away. Thus far, we have received a total of 1,921 miles of those applications. Of this amount, the applications for 480 miles are in the application intake step. Which means the applicant has submitted the application and provided some supporting documents. And a Caltrans team member is doing an initial screening. And 1,006 miles are in the functional review with active coordination underway between Caltrans and the applicant. Encroachment permits have been issued

for 429 miles. And for 6 miles, the work is complete, and the encroachment permit has been closed. The numbers presented today are from our Caltrans encroachment Permit System, also referred to as SEPs. By allowing both Caltrans and the applicant to track the status of the application, SEPS provides a critical layer of transparency with these applications. Next slide. Throughout this program, Caltrans has worked with CDT partners on encroachment permit applications to construct on the state highway right-of-way. This chart provides a 6-month view of the MMBN encroachment permits. As shown in the dark blue, Caltrans districts have issued encroachment permits for construction of 429 miles of the network. The light blue is where districts are actively engaging with applicants to review the submitted information. This data reflects the significant influx of applications beginning in February. These applications are at varying stages of progress, as Caltrans is accepting all middle-mile broadband network applications, regardless of how complete they may be. This is unlike the standard encroachment permit process, where all components are required to be included at the time of application submittal. For those 1,006 miles, the functional teams are reviewing the application package. If the documents are missing information, or the information does not have enough details for the functional approval the applicant is notified, and the district will work with them until the information is provided. For these, Caltrans needs sufficient detail and information to ensure structural integrity of the state highway system infrastructure such as culverts, bridge foundations, and pavement. As well as other assets that cross the state highway, such as railroads, utilities, and waterways. The yellow section at the base shows applications for 480 miles undergoing an initial screening. Next slide. This slide provides an update on the status of encroachment permits by CDT Partner. The data for the application intake screening, application functional review, and the issued permits is from the Caltrans Encroachment Permit System, or SEPS. For the other information, the newly signed and pre-submission groups, CDT has provided what we might expect in the coming months. The status update is a sign of progress being made as well as the work ahead of us. For the middle mile broadband network, Caltrans has created different pre-construction paths through which the CDT partners can obtain the encroachment permit. This is part of our ongoing effort to identify options for applicants to help reduce the timeline for them to get to construction. As indicated in the encroachment permit data shared by Mr. Monroe earlier prior to February 2025, the Caltrans district teams reviewed the applications and accompanying materials submitted by the CDT partners and issued the encroachment permits through our standard encroachment permit process. Over time, CDT's approach evolved to increasingly leverage the partner builds. Given these network segments had previously been part of our Caltrans build, we understood the size and complexity of these projects, and to better support and manage the

evolving workload we recommended utilizing the quality management assurance process, otherwise known as QMAP. QMAP is designated to advance complex projects through direct collaboration with the district team members. Working through QMAP, we heard the applicant's concerns and made modifications. Such as, we identified broadband as a utility, which reduced some of the barriers. And we removed the project agreement requirement while retaining the essential partnership and coordination aspect of QMAP. Encroachment permits are being delivered through all of these paths, and it is up to the partner's discretion to leverage these options. Some of the CDT partners continued through the QMAP process. Some are utilizing the hybrid approach, whereby they submit an incomplete application, and the Caltrans district supports them as they work through the process. And some partners are also choosing to utilize the alternate path for NEPA, what Mr. Karam outlined earlier. It is through coordination that we can best assist the CDT partners. Caltrans may be able to help the CDT partners identify where they might need to focus their efforts which is one of the key reasons we have shifted to accept all applications, whether or not the application is complete. And as our district teams identify something that needs help, we are working with the applicants to understand what is needed. Our Caltrans district teams have decades of knowledge and expertise in the locations where the applicants want to work. Our district staff know these areas, know the state highway system in these areas, and they know the stakeholders in these areas. They can guide the applicants through the process quickly and effectively. Caltrans did consider a more centralized approach. However, we would have still needed confirmation on the project details by the district teams to be able to issue an encroachment permit. We all share the desire to move these projects into construction, and the successful advancement of these projects relies on collaborative efforts with each of us fulfilling our responsibilities. Next slide, please. For the miles outlined on the previous slide these charts show the number of encroachments permit applications submitted by each partner and its corresponding status. The Caltrans teams are actively working with the applicants to help get these encroachment permits issued. Next slide. Caltrans is prioritizing every middle-mile broadband network encroachment permit application that comes in, and the district team begins screening the application and informing the applicant of any additional information needed to begin the functional review. One-on-one concierge treatment continues with every applicant. As I mentioned earlier, we modified our traditional encroachment permit process by accepting all applications regardless of completeness. This step offers early coordination between the CDT partner and the Caltrans district staff who have first-hand knowledge of their routes and any stakeholders that may need to be contacted and consulted with before construction can begin. We continually work to enhance our internal and

external coordination as we incorporate best practices to successfully meet the middle-mile broadband network goals. This includes standing up multiple lines of a communication, including a dedicated email address for all to use. And a strike team of subject matter experts to answer questions from the network partners and the Caltrans district staff. The headquarters encroachment Permit Program has weekly meetings with each district to not only track progress, but also to share lessons learned and support consistent implementation of requirements and changes as we continue to adapt our process. Within the districts, the team members have the support of their executive teams up to their district directors. And in headquarters, they have the support of each division the MMBN team, as well as myself, the chief engineer and our director. And as I mentioned earlier, we have created multiple paths for CDT partners to complete the needed pre-construction work. In addition to the alternate path to NEPA, Caltrans is exercising its discretion and not requiring CDT partners to demonstrate they have obtained all necessary permits, approvals, and concurrences from other agencies prior to issuing the Caltrans encroachment permit. To expedite the issuance of these encroachment permits, Caltrans is not asking the CDT partners to provide other agency permits prior to issuing our permit to them. This is outlined in the encroachment permit special provision. So, in closing, we acknowledge the frustration felt by CDT partners and our district teams as we have pivoted to provide multiple avenues for securing encroachment permits for the middle-mile broadband network. We have made many adjustments, learned from some of those adjustments, and continue to adapt to support successful completion of the state's middle-mile broadband network. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Benton and Mr. Karam for the Caltrans update. And thank you again for your partnership in adjusting, no one-size-fits-all for any partner, so thank you for being very flexible. I would also like to recognize Assembly member Boerner, thank you very much we'll just note that, and then I'd like to open up to any advisory members that have questions for Caltrans. Yes, Assembly member Boerner.

Tasha Boerner: Yes, thank you so much for that presentation. I have a couple of questions. I first want to say I apologize for my Senate colleagues they apparently have session today and so they cannot attend the middle mile committee, but they did say that I was allowed to say, Ana Cabarrillo said I'm allowed to say she agrees with me and whatever I say. So thank you, Ana, for your trust in this matter. But first thing I want to understand is the impact on timeline. Because at the end of the day we have to build this we do have a timeline so what is the impact. I have several other questions about the process slides that we have. But if Caltrans, or the Department of Finance can answer,

what are the impacts of the timeline and budget for these delays, because we're not even at the \$3,900, and I think I saw somewhere like, 3400, 34-something instead of 3,900 miles to be built and the permitting process for that was supposed to be done in December. And so we're now almost in June so what is the impact we think overall to the projects. And then I have three other questions.

The Chair: I think the best person to answer your question is Mr. Mark Monroe.

Mark Monroe: Yes, thank you. Yeah, that's something that we're really keeping an eye on. To clarify, of the roughly 4,000 miles that will be on Caltrans right away, we're really talking about a universe of about 3,500 miles of permits so we're going to be hearing more from our partners about how that will work in terms of their schedules, what they've told us and I think they'll be talking more in more detail about this, perhaps, but they need them on a rolling basis, and the kind of the drop dead that we have is that they need to have them by, December of this year 2025, in order to complete the work by December of 2026.

Tasha Boerner: And that's what the partners have said?

Mark Monroe: That's what some of the partners have said. I think some of them, each of them has a different time frame for kind of what their drop dead is. But overall, the December 2025 is the latest date by which if the all the permits are out, that the work can be done by December of 2026.

Tasha Boerner: But in the original timeline, it was supposed to be December 2024, so we're a year delayed, and they still think for the same price, they're going to be able to do something with a year less time. I mean, I want to know I want to have that magic. Can we give it to all state agencies to have that magic?

Michael Kever: Mr. Monroe, could you explain the December 2024 date and the JOC contracts versus the encroachment permits and what we're going through with the delivery of the other miles, please?

Mark Monroe: Sure. So, yes, that's correct. So, kind of going back, when all of this was put together, there was a December 2024 deadline for encumbrance of the funds and that means when we talk about the JOC's job order contracts, we needed to have all of the funding encumbered by then, which means we had to have signed all the construction contracts. And that goes back to what you're talking about Assembly member, is that in order to do that

under the Caltrans normal process, we would need to have completed all of the pre-construction work, like design and engineering, and like permitting by December 2024. So, it wasn't that the December 2024 deadline was needed to meet the December 2026 deadline. The December 2024 deadline was purely driven by the ARPA funding once the ARPA funding was removed, then that that removed that hard December 2024 deadline that we had been working towards.

Tasha Boerner: But we only have the funds allocated in the state budget, even without the ARPA funding till December 2026, and the legislature would have to act to extend that. Is that not correct?

Mark Monroe: So the general fund that is now being used is actually available through December of 2028. So, in terms of that expenditure period, it's available for encumbrance where it was supposed to be under contract by the end of 2024. Most of it was. It now has to be under contract by the end of 2026, and it's available for liquidation through 2028.

Tasha Boerner: So, the one-year delay in permitting could end up being a two-year delay in implementation if it takes until 2028 to do the encumbrance. Did I understand that correctly?

Mark Monroe: No, I wouldn't say that, because first of all, I wouldn't say it's a one-year delay in permitting because we still are working towards being able to complete the project by December of 2026 as was planned. And at this point, not planning on moving completion beyond December of 2026, where we're still working towards completing it by then.

Tasha Boerner: Okay, so then second question for Caltrans. Of the 305 miles that Caltrans is building, it appears all to be under construction, which suggests 100% final permitting. Can you compare and contrast the process Caltrans went through to permit your own projects with the process that the joint builders are going through. And what are any of the lessons to learn from your own projects that we can apply to the joint builders?

Janice Benton: Yeah, I'll go ahead and take that. I appreciate the question. So, of the Caltrans build miles, which is about 305 miles we did get the full permits, environmental permits, and so forth. We finished the design work, and then, handed them over to CDT to move through the construction process. What we did learn from that process is we recognize that the timelines for obtaining environmental requirements and also obtaining permits from our other state agencies and federal partners was quite the timeline it was going to take a

while. And that's why at the beginning early on, CDT and Caltrans partnered with all of these agencies to develop programmatic permits, or programmatic approaches. Meaning, if our project meets these minimum criteria, then by the time we get to them to issue a permit from that agency, it would be, hey, we met all the criteria we early agreed upon and hit the button, and we can move forward and get your permit. And so, what we've learned from that process is, one, the timelines are very difficult to meet but two, also, we learned a lot about what was out there on our roadways in terms of what we may not have known before. In terms of our projects, we're building something we knew we needed to do some environmental studies, some biological studies, some cultural studies, and so forth, and moving forward that process. The biggest advantage and the biggest benefit we got out of the early-on processes is developing those programmatic agreements with our resource agencies. So by the time our project was done designed, and we meet that criteria, the permitting process was very quick. And that's what we're trying to do as well, we're taking those lessons learned with the CDT partners. So, we're offering and sharing what the programmatic agreements include, we're connecting them with those resource agencies, with the same folks that we were working with, so they can work with them as well to get any permits that they may need on their projects and leveraging all of that work and so forth. Also, if we did studies, and our project was not into the build bucket, then we're willing to share that with the CDT partners as well. So any work that we had done and was completed, we are sharing that with the partners.

Tasha Boerner: And by when you say you're sharing that, you're sharing your studies, but they can't use those studies if they're doing similar or same segments?

Janice Benton: No, half of that, yes. We will share our studies with them, and they can use those studies as part of their project. Meaning they don't have to go redo any of those studies.

Tasha Boerner: Okay, great, great. That's great lessons learned. And then up until February 2025, Caltrans asserted that some of the joint builders were not telephone utilities, which Caltrans had to backtrack on. Why are you confident that you're correct on the applicability of NEPA to this project? And some of the joint builders are suggesting it doesn't apply, because this is not a federally funded highway project, so can you comment to that whole range of issues that we're hearing about?

Janice Benton: Yes, so regarding the NEPA, in April of 2021, we received a memo from our Federal Highways partners regarding broadband and other

similar type installations that are non-transportation related. Because issuing that encroachment permit is a federal action, that's what triggers the federal action, and that's what triggers the NEPA requirement. Now, Caltrans has the delegated, as Mr. Karam mentioned earlier, we have the delegation for that NEPA CE sign off. But it doesn't mean that it's not a federal action. We're doing it on behalf of our federal highways' partners. So it is a federal action when we issue an encroachment permit. And again, this was noted in the April 2021 Federal Highways Memo to Caltrans. Okay. And my last question, then I'll let everybody else take over with all their questions. What are the major accomplishments of the strike team, and what have you guys learned about the internal delays at Caltrans? Are there any themes or takeaways that are being applied across the organization because of the learnings that we have from this project?

Janice Benton: Yeah, I'm going to hand this one over to Mr. Karam. He's really facilitating and managing the strike team for us.

Elias Karam: So, for the past several months, we've been meeting weekly with each of the partners. They've raised several issues throughout the process. Early on, there was discussions about the MLA and SLA Master License Agreement and Site License Agreement requirements. We were able to listen to the partners, hear their feedback, and then work towards removing those requirements. Each of the partners has had different concerns and different issues as they've developed their projects. And we've worked through their project-specific constraints to help them resolve them, and also build those lessons learned, and share those lessons learned with each of the districts. Let's see, you want to add anything else. Sorry.

Janice Benton: Yeah, and I think the one thing that we did lesson learned also was the need for communication, timely, often, and across the state. So that strike team was also part of our communications channels out to our district, team members to make sure that information and the changes as we kept pivoting and adapting to meet the needs of the program, that strike team was helping us communicate to all the districts as well. And so that became, like, a point of contact for, hey, what about this? How do I handle this? Just another effort to try and ensure consistency across all of the districts.

Tasha Boerner: Okay, thank you, I appreciate those answers. It'll be interesting to hear what the joint builders have to say.

The Chair: Thank you, Assembly member Boerner. I also want to recognize that we have, Loyal Terry that has joined for Assembly member Aguiar-Curry, so thank you very much. I see, Supervisor Starkey also has a question.

Valerie Starkey: Just a quick question, I do appreciate the thorough explanation. If I'm understanding this correctly, all of these recent strike teams and this communication, is that within the last, just, month since we've had these concerns, or was this something that was implemented prior to the committee having the concerns and asking for further explanations.

Elias Karam: So, actually, the strike team was officially formed in February of 2024. When CDT started pivoting their bill to the partner builds, we formed a strike team. But as those miles continue to increase, we added more members to that strike team. So it's been about a year and a half now that we've formed that team.

Valerie Starkey: Okay, because like, Assembly member Boerner said, I'm excited to hear from the partners as well because this sounds a very good coming from Caltrans. But I want to make sure that the two are connected, so I do appreciate your time today.

The Chair: Thank you, Supervisor. Are there any other members? Yes. Ms. Perrault.

Michele Perrault: Just to build off Supervisor Starkey's questions. I mean, I think probably what you're like, well, let me start by saying this. This is an undertaking across a very large state. It's something we've never done before, and so I recognize that with that comes a need to continually analyze and pivot the way that we roll something out, the way we work through that. I think that it's been evident across several years where we have seen some of the shifts of miles from Caltrans to partners, and really thinking about how is it best that we implement this in an efficient way, both maybe from not just a fiscal space, but also just utilizing resources across the board. So I want to recognize that, but I do think, I echo a little bit of concern that I appreciate that we are now hearing that there are some kind of alternative processes for reviews and we're bringing in applications when they're not complete. I know prior to, they weren't coming in or you weren't accepting them unless they were complete. It just feels a little late, is, I think, what you're hearing. It feels a little bit like we are coming up against we have a year and a half to that deadline. So maybe you can talk a little bit about now that we've put in some alternatives, now that we have tried to streamline some of these pieces. Are we really going to make that 2026 deadline? Because it feels like there's still a lot of applications and

permits out there. And then secondarily, is that partially I mean, we're seeing a huge balloon, it seems like, of permit applications coming in and being reviewed now. Is that because Caltrans was kind of waiting. I mean, partners hadn't submitted them. Like, we've seen a bubble, basically. Is that what we're experiencing right now? Or is or are we seeing the increase because we've changed processes? So if you can talk a little bit about that, and then I think ultimately. And maybe we'll get there with the partners, but I think If you can talk about how have we played this out to know that by December 2026, we're going to get there? Whether that is getting all permits done by 2025 or otherwise, I think if you can talk a little bit more about that, I'd appreciate it.

Janice Benton: Yeah, so thank you for the question. So, just regarding, will we meet the deadline, our goal is to meet the deadline. That's the goal of all of us, sitting here, including CDT and our other partners. What I will say is and you can see through the data that we put in front of you, there was an influx of applications, mainly because we made the decision of, we're not going wait for the application to be complete. We'll start that process now, because the advantage of that is now we're talking with them. We're communicating with them, we're helping them and guide them through that completeness process instead of just saying nope, sorry, you're done, you're not done, you're not done. So it's really changing that mindset and that approach on how we're partnering with the applicants to get this through the process. Now, as the applicants come in, they have questions for us. They also, we do appreciate the questions they're bringing in, or they're challenging us on some of these requirements. Because we're not just saying, nope, that's the way it is. We actually are going in, we're assessing our requirements, we're assessing the laws, the federal requirements, and whatever other requirement that comes into play. And if we do have flexibility in that, or if we can find a path, we do take a risk assessment, and if we find that path where, okay, maybe we can let's go ahead and try this and see what happens, or we're willing to accept the risk of not requiring this piece or letting up a little bit on that requirement. That's the advantage of the conversations we're having with our partners and challenging them and challenging us in how we do this. We do this on a daily basis on our projects. We deliver thousands of projects, we know how to deliver projects, we know the process it takes. We know the steps, we know who to coordinate with, we know who to talk to, we know what stakeholders and partners are going to come into play when We want to go out and do a project. So we're trying to share that knowledge and that experience with the partners, at the same time trying to find where are those flexibilities, where can we either adjust or make adjustments or make different requirements for those. And the other piece of that is, just to kind of just reiterate this, is our district teams they're very knowledgeable, they're very skilled, they know exactly what

to do and how to do it. When we pivot in the middle of their process, we really need to communicate to them and get that message to them. So sometimes it may take a little while for them to hear it or understand why we're making that change. So there's a little bit of that piece of it. So, that bubble was, we accepted all applications and now we're like, okay, now we've got to work on all these applications. And we've received about 1,900 miles, we expect another 1900-2,000 miles to come in.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Benton. I also want to recognize Kyle Krueger that has joined for Senator Caballero. I have two questions on the dais, and first is for, Mr. Secretary Nick Maduros.

Nick Maduros: Thank you so much. So I'm heartened to hear the progress that's been made since the last Middle Mile Advisory Committee meeting in terms of the process, and the service and the work with the partners and the applications filed. Question for you, the app the miles approved is still short I think it's fair to say pretty far short of where we need to get if we're going to complete the project on the timeframe that we're aiming for. Can you talk a little bit about how you foresee that playing out. Is this like a freight train that's very slow to start, but once it gets moving, we'll chug along or is this the pace at which we can expect to see permits approved. I mean, it's certainly better than it was, but it's still far short of where we need to be. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Janice Benton: Yep, yep, thank you. So, yeah, it's definitely not the latter. We're not at the pace that we want to be, or we anticipate to be. So, I think once we get a few of these permits, the bigger permits through, we're all going to learn what was needed, what was required, and how we got there. So that's going to be one thing between Caltrans and the CDT partners, we're going to know, okay, this is what approval looks like, and this is what's needed. The other piece, for example, what Mr. Karam mentioned earlier with the alternate pathway for NEPA, the outcome of that is really a streamlined process. The typical process would be the applicant does their studies, they do it, they hand it to us, and then we review them and confirm and validate and so forth, and then do that. Well, that step right there, we just eliminated that step. We're saying, if you did them, you did the studies, you certify you've done the studies, then we're going to accept them and move on. And we're not going to we're not going to look at it. We don't even need the information for them to move forward through that process. With the exception of the cultural studies and the Federal Endangered Species Act. But all those other requirements are that. So, we're identifying those streamlined steps that's going to reduce the timeline. Now, we've been the just going back to the question earlier, we've put these in

place in just the last few months. So, it's going to take a little while for everybody to get on board, meaning the CDT partners are still doing the studies, we just don't need to see them. They're still going to certify the information, we just don't need to see the details behind it. So they're still working on some of these studies and moving them through the process. So, as soon as we see some breakthrough I think it's going to go much faster. We are getting weekly updates from our districts, and they anticipate that as well. They anticipate submitting encroachment permits within the next month. So, we really do see an opportunity, or an influx of permits being issued. It's not going to be at the pace that we're at now.

Nick Maduros: Can I just ask one following question? Have you talked to your counterparts in other states, or investigated what other states are doing? I would assume that there are some other states that are having broadband put down along rights of way. Is it a similar process? Is it different? Do you know?

Janice Benton: You know what, I would have to check in with our subject matter experts on that question.

The Chair: Thank you, Secretary. Acting Director Keever.

Michael Keever: Thank you. Is it possible to bring the slide up? I think it was slide 3 that showed the schedule, the timeline, sorry. Because I want to make sure we're answering the question that keeps coming up from Assembly member Boerner, and others. And I wanted to see if Caltrans could explain. So, the question has been, why are the Caltrans Projects, why are the permits completed, and why the influx of permits from the partners now. And perhaps you could explain. And even to Secretary Maduros' question, the completion of the process and when to expect it. If I look at this, it almost looks like there was a marathon that was started, but Caltrans got a 10-mile head start. So, perhaps you could explain within the context of the schedule and the pivot from the Caltrans build to the partner build, how that affects these questions that are all being brought up.

Janice Benton: Yeah, so the pivot is really, like everybody's kind of mentioned, we got a two-year-plus head start on the race. Caltrans began it. But we, at that time, we did realize it, that there were going to be some challenges with meeting that deadline, even our own deadline with a lot of the activities that need to be placed. So that was one of the things, by putting those programmatics in place that really helped that timeline. And then as CDT they're managing this program, and they're trying to leverage every penny and every dollar that comes in the program and understanding and realizing that

bringing in some of the partner builds and having it be a partnership you're saving cost. And so bringing those partners into the process, but that started later, so they're at a disadvantage, I'll say, because they're coming in much later than when we started our process. So that's kind of that big piece in that timeline that is so critical. And so now, what we've learned over the last 2-plus years is what we're trying to bring to the table with the current partners and the applications coming in. So, bringing that piece of it in, bringing in what we've learned, what we're working with. For example, railroads. If you want to go under and over a railroad, it's going to take some time. We don't control railroads timelines. Railroad controls railroad timelines. And I'm not trying to say railroads is the problem, but I'm just saying Caltrans had to do the same thing. We had to work with railroads to make sure that we could do the work over under their facility and work around them. And so we're sharing that knowledge and that awareness that there's going to be some coordination, so you may want to reach out to them early. And we're helping them make those connections.

Michael Keever: If I could just one follow-up. So, on permits, you talked about NEPA and SHPO and CDFW, and Section 7 and Section 106, those are permits required by others. What is Caltrans require for the permits. Forget others. What is Caltrans requirements to get the encroachment permit?

Janice Benton: So what we're doing is we're saying, CDT partners, you guys go get all those. What we require is, one, you've got to show us where you're going to build, and how you're going to build. Because we need to know what asset it may be impacting and then try to work through what's the best path forward for that. So we need to know where you're going to place the conduits, we need to know where you're going to place the vaults. And then what does that mean to the impacts of our assets? For example, if you're going to go near a bridge. We need to know, are you going to hit the bridge foundation. The foundation is underground, and nobody knows where it is, except having that information available. So when the information comes in, it says we're going to go from point A to point B, we need to know how you're going to get to work around those assets, the culverts. And in some cases, some of the partners want to trench in our pavement, and we're being flexible on that. We're having those conversations with the partners. The one ask is we make sure that you go below our base, because the next time we go out and do a rehab project, we don't want to run into that conduit cause a disruption or a stoppage of service. So we're asking go below the base. It's those kinds of questions that we need to know before we can issue an encroachment permit. And the other piece is the NEPA, because Caltrans has the delegation of NEPA from Federal Highways we can't ignore that. We have to go through that process. So that's another piece

of it. The other the other main piece of this is how you're going to manage your construction site, meaning manage the traffic, keep the workers safe that are on the side of the highway or in the lane doing the construction. So it's making sure that the travelers are safe, the workers are safe, that's part of that traffic plans that we require.

The Chair: Thank you, Caltrans. are there any other members that have any questions before we go to the partners? All right, I see none at this time. I'm sure after the partners, there might be some more questions. We are doing this in alphabetical order, so, first up is American Dark Fiber. We have Dave Daigle and Zack Baayen that will be presenting for them.

Dave Daigle: Thank you very much, Chair, and the entire committee. We're very happy to be here today. And, as Californians, we are completely committed to this project. We share the values behind it. We want to see broadband for all. And as a developer of dark fiber networks, this particular project is extremely well-suited to what we do. With that said, let me tell you a little bit about who we are. Could you tee up the next slide, please? There you go. American Dark Fiber is what is known as a CELC, a Competitive Local Exchange Carrier. We are registered at the FCC, we are licensed by the CPUC here in the state of California. We have a certificate of public convenience and a utility number, which is U7342C. What that means is we have a full facilities right to develop telecommunications infrastructure in the public right-of-way and in this particular case, as it relates to Caltrans and others. So we, have been building, as individuals for over 30 years here in the state. I've been in the telecommunications industry since 1987. I formed American Dark Fiber in 2017 excuse me, after a previous company was acquired by Crown Castle. We received that CELC license in 2019, did some building in Southern California. We're based in Los Angeles. And we've been building ever since. We were introduced to the MMBI project about two and a half years ago. We submitted a bid through the RFI Two process. And we were awarded an initial phase last August, that phase was approximately 400 miles. My colleague, Zack, will get into some of those details. More recently, in April of this year, we were awarded a second phase of development. Also, a significant amount of miles, nearly 500 miles in this particular case. And what I'm really trying to say is we've been doing this for a long time. Our contractor is a California-based entity, out of Corona, California, a firm by the name of HP Communications. They were founded in 1998. They've been developing on behalf of entities like ourselves and maybe several others that are here in the audience today or about to tell you their experiences with the MMBI. So, we are a group we're a team. We're a team with the CDT, with the state of California, with our contractors, and our own enterprise. And our mission is no different. We have to build network. And

in doing that, the longest pole in the tent is the permit cycle. I heard a mention about the concern about the timeline by 2026. If we had our permits by September of this year, no problem. That's no problem. Our experience in building in the right-of-way, in urban zones, in suburban zones, and in rural zones affords us the experience to know what needs to be done. And we've worked for years in processing permits with Caltrans. So we have a lot of experience with them too. Would you hit the next slide, please. As far as our projects go I'll have Zack give you some of the minutiae associated with it. And Zack is our VP of Operations. Zack, you may want to introduce yourself.

Zack Baayen: Yep, thanks, Dave. Zack Baayen, VP of Ops. So I'll go over some of the details of what we have going on here. So, for the project overview, as you can see, we have approximately 900 miles from the routes that Dave mentioned, contracted back in August is about 400 miles shown in blue in the maps below. So, as you can see, we're kind of spread out and chopped up throughout the state, from north to south, east to west. For the routes shown in red below awarded in April of this year, it's about 500 miles. Next slide, please. So we yeah, again, break it down into two different phases, so for the routes contracted last year in August about 400 miles, 95 miles of that is excavation within the Caltrans right-of-way. 154 miles of that is traffic control within the Caltrans right-of-way, which includes the 95 miles above. There's about 305 miles that is not excavation in Caltrans right-of-way, so within the RFI square process, we got creative in our designs. We're using existing aerial pull infrastructure, city-county roads, and existing conduit wherever possible. We have about 117 miles of that, that is construction complete of the 400 miles, so we're about 30% construction complete on the initial award. 86 miles of that is fiber placed which is about 27 or so percent. There's 131 miles with permits that equates to about 269 permits that we've received and that's everything. That's Caltrans, that's aerial pole attachment permits, that's city permits, lease conduit permits that sort of thing. We broke ground back in August. And continues to today, we just have two of our routes currently that have not yet broken ground. Waiting on permits to start construction on those. The next slide, or the next bullet there, 269 miles awaiting permits, that's actually a typo it should be 213 miles, sorry about that. And for this phase, or this bucket, we would need the permits by September 15th to meet the construction deadline of end of 2026, and we feel confident about that. For the next phase, the April award of this year that's approximately 500 miles as we mentioned. These routes are currently being designed and finalized from a low-level design, or from a high-level design to a low-level design. But the preliminary estimates are approximately 130 miles will be excavation in Caltrans right-of-way and another 195 miles will be needed for traffic control in Caltrans right-of-way. Due to the routes just being contracted last month nothing has started construction

yet, or obviously fiber placed for this bucket. And we think for this bucket, if we can get permits by at the latest February of 2026, we can meet the construction deadline. Next slide, please. So what has made us successful? Dave, do you want to take this one?

Dave Daigle: Sure. Well, first and foremost, the fact that the MMBI initiative was for dark fiber, we qualify and in discussing the program with the CDT we found them to be a completely engaging agency. They explained what their mission was, how they wanted to accomplish it. And they were very learned and professional about explaining that to us because we were new to the state in terms of working with the agency in this manner. So from that perspective we were very much, quite frankly, surprised. It was a very efficient set of discussions. We got down to brass tacks in developing routes and costs and things like that and we made it through the first round. That open communication was tremendous. And it's continued on ever since. We've bumped up into issues and circumstances some of which are related to the Caltrans process that we're here today to talk about where they've been very helpful to us. So, we applaud the CDT and the state in allowing us to participate and to be engaged with a group that's really committed to making this happen. And I put Caltrans in that category too, because although we are completely frustrated and I don't want to make any mince words, we were very, very frustrated. We were awarded contracts in late August of last year and through February of this year, we got zero built basically along Caltrans right-of-way. And it was the permit process got hung up prior to the MMBI, we had submitted for and received permits from Caltrans on a regular basis. The typical turnaround on those permits was about 30 days. It was beautiful and that was the exact process we anticipated when we were given the award. When we got into actually trying to implement that and submitting permits and we found out that we needed all these different agreements, the two-party agreement, a three-party agreement, an MLA. As a CELC who has a certificate of public convenience we were asking, what is this? Why do we need it? We never needed it before. And so, that was then we're here today. I heard a lot of good things. And I think we're well past that problem. But that was some of the inertia we had to overcome. So here we are today. The CDT's been great with us. If we can go to the next slide, I think that'll be really helpful because this dovetails into what do we need to be successful. We know we can construct we've got the right contractors and subcontractors working for us. We've been engaged in this industry myself for over 35 years. So, we know we can do it what we'd like Caltrans to consider, and I don't know how they can do it based on what they've already described, but if they could revert for at least the CELC class of joint builder, a reversion back to the pre-MMBI process. I mean, we had permits submitted to Caltrans May, June, and July of last year that flew

through. Some of those were attached to the MMBI process and they got stopped. They were rescinded because it was MMBI. So the efficient process that was created didn't work for us. We were stopped cold and so for 7 or 8 months that's where we stood. Now, again, I'm going to give Caltrans a lot of credit because they have changed their whole posture with the Joint Builder community, and we appreciate that very much. And we hope some of the things we've heard today do become reality. But if they could consider going back to that because we never had to deal with NEPA on certain elements, particularly in urban or suburban zones, even in some of the rural places where we built. These are small elements. We have poles we're attaching a cable. These are existing poles in the right-of-way that we can't get through the process. And we were told that we needed biological, cultural, and endangered species studies. And we're thinking for a pole attachment. Why? We couldn't understand it, so we'd really like to see Caltrans become an advocate for the joint builders as the lead agency towards NEPA. We fully recognize the need for compliance to the environment for new builds that fall either adjacent to or outside of the Caltrans right of way, or in areas where Caltrans has sensitive ground. We appreciate that very much and we intend to abide by it. But where areas like that don't apply. We're looking for a highway crossing that is Caltrans. We would love to see that 30-day interval. We get that our piece of this puzzle in terms of the timelines are not in jeopardy. If however, we do have to come up with the studies and pay for them, these studies, by the way, cost tens of thousands of dollars. We love the idea of utilizing Caltrans studies if they exist. The challenge is, in areas where they shouldn't even apply, why do we need them? So we'd love for Caltrans to consider that aspect. I think I'm taking up too much air, and I'll leave it alone. Zack, did you want to add anything to that?

Zack Baayen: No, but we can move on to the next slide. So there we go. Other pertinent info slides. So, as we mentioned, we've received numerous permits for the MMBI from Caltrans with no NEPA requirements prior to them finding out that they were for the Middle Mile Project. Again, in our 30 years of experience building in California, we have never had to perform these studies for Caltrans related to NEPA until this year. As David mentioned, there were months of delays during the Caltrans QMAP process due to newly added MMBI processes, which included those MLAs, SLAs, and two-party agreements. Which were ultimately rescinded, as well as moving to the new permitting system called CEPS. So there was a transition period there that took, took some time. And below there, there are 12 examples of permits that were issued by Caltrans for the MMBI before they realized that they were for the MMBI. So we, went at risk and started submitting applications early before the announcement came out that we were part of the Middle Mile Project. Here's a list of 12 as you can

see, many of these were submitted in July and August and they flew through, and we got permits. Some were traffic control somewhere underground. Those permits, the average timeline was 28 days. The longest of which was 95 days. That was for a bore under the I-10 freeway which didn't require any sort of NEPA documentation from us. For the permits that we've received via the new process we see, and that's the CEPS process, we've seen an average of about 57 days to receive those permits. And for the applications we've submitted but have not yet received permits with Caltrans, we are averaging 120 days and counting. So that kind of summarizes, I think, our presentation and kind of what we're dealing with now versus what we were dealing with prior to the MMBI.

Dave Daigle: I'd like to add just one thing. Thank you, Zack. This is not necessarily a Caltrans problem or a joint builder problem, or a state of California problem, but the other element here that's really challenging for us is the federal permitting process through BLM and others. And we would love to see, as a joint builder, a cooperative team you created a hit team or a strike team, I think is what I heard call with Caltrans. We need a similar type thing. For the state to embrace in dealing with the feds. Yeah, we've heard a lot of great things coming out of Washington about streamlining permits and things like that. But we're still being told it's going to take 270 days minimally to get a BLM permit. That's a problem, too, and that's outside of the purview of this committee. I realize that, but I'm going to mention it because it could be helpful for us to all join forces in that regard.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Daigle and Mr. Baayen. I really appreciate your presentation. I would like to open it up to any members that have questions. First up is Supervisor Starkey.

Valerie Starkey: Thank you. And this question's going to be more toward Caltrans, to ask why the MMBI process for this particular project now is taking longer than 30 days, when previously it took less than 30 days. Is there a reason once it had the MMBI title on it that things shifted.

Janice Benton: Yeah, we're looking into that right now with this information that's been shared. One thing is, I will say, if you look at some of those permits they're really short little pieces and segments, so it looks like they're going over and under our highway. Some may be, and again, I'm going to confirm this with our district folks in metropolitan areas in some cases, our districts are confirming the NEPA steps themselves. The applicant may not even realize that we did that, whether we had studies or our information on a recent project. Or they know in metropolitan areas where it's very constrained on where you can go and what you can do and other resources they may be impacting the

district may have completed some of that. But again we're following up with our districts, our two districts, on those locations.

Valerie Starkey: And so my follow-up on that is that, why wasn't that communicated with the partner? If they did that, and that was the reason for it, why was that not communicated with American Dark Fiber.

Janice Benton: That's Right, right. That's what we're trying to figure out. Is that the case? Did somebody else do NEPA for that particular project?

Valerie Starkey: Okay. And I just want to say to American Dark Fiber, this is exactly what I wanted to hear today, so I appreciate you taking the time to be here.

The Chair: Thank you, Supervisor. Assembly member Boerner.

Tasha Boerner: Thank you and building on Supervisor Starkey's question the last slide, I think American Dark Fiber presented, and I want to thank you, because I don't think it's easy to come and testify in front of this and share all these things. I think a lot of people were nervous about doing it, so I really appreciate you being so straightforward. The last slide you brought up, my understanding is these are all things that were part of MMBI, but they didn't know they were part of MMBI, and they got permitted quite quickly. But once they found out they were part of MMBI, then they got slowed down and then they had to go into NEPA. So the question for Caltrans is, why did these things have no NEPA requirement beforehand but once they found out, oh no, this is part of MMBI there's NEPA when clearly 156, which I voted, for was intended to streamline what we could. So it doesn't make sense that like there was no NEPA, and then, wait, MMBI, there's NEPA. That doesn't make any sense, so if you could clarify that, that would be helpful because the purpose of 156 was to get the state out of the way, and suddenly the feds are in the way and that doesn't make any sense to anybody. I think Ana Caballero would nod, I think maybe Cecilia Aguiar-Curry is somewhere here maybe she would nod and Supervisor Starkey's nodding. So I think if you could answer that question for us and not say you're looking into it but saying how could this possibly be the case because that makes no sense to us.

Janice Benton: Right, so NEPA is not necessarily specific to MMBI, and we recognize that and that's what we're trying to follow up with, is why that shift? Why that change in that decision? Part of it is, like I said, the information may have been already completed and we just we took it upon ourselves to finish that NEPA step for that particular permit.

Tasha Boerner: That was a lot of permits. That wasn't one. That was several permits. And so, it does look like there was a systemic shift because all those other permits were part of a MMBI project. But then there's seems to be this shift once they found out it was MMBI, that there was then different requirements placed on it. And what we don't want is different requirements just because it's something, there should be no different requirements for this permitting process. In fact, they should be easier requirements.

Janice Benton: Yep.

Tasha Boerner: I mean, we still want to protect the environment. I love protecting the environment. Protect the kangaroo rat at all costs, that's fine.

Janice Benton: Yep, we agree. And just one more SB156 covered the CEQA statutory exemption but unfortunately it doesn't cover the NEPA part, the national the federal piece.

Tasha Boerner: Yes, because we can't make federal policy. We can only do state policy. So we wanted to get the state out of the way. That was the point of 156. So it seems like the feds weren't in the way we took the state out of the way. And suddenly, when they realized that these permits were part of MMBI, the feds got in the way when they weren't in the way beforehand, and there's something else going on there. So it'd be great in the next committee of the Middle Mile Advisory Committee, MMAC! There are too many acronyms today. Get an update on why that was there, or you can follow up with all the members and our offices, that would be also helpful.

The Chair: Thank you, Assembly member. I did. Thank you very much, for acknowledging Assembly member Aguiar-Curry has joined us as well, thank you. Any other questions from any advisory members for American Dark Fiber? Yes, Secretary Maduros?

Nick Maduros: Thank you and thank you for being here this afternoon. Question for you, do you do work in other states? I mean to my earlier question to Caltrans can you give us, if you do similar work in other states along highways, can you provide any perspective on how the process may differ, or be this or be the same.

Dave Daigle: Sure, I'd be happy to. We do have CLEC status in 10 other states outside of California. We are active in the state of Florida as we speak. Most of that is urban zone, a lot of metro type build, so it's a little bit different in scope

then here. But in my previous life the process was the same in terms of going through various either county, state, local transportation departments to get your permits, get your encroachment permits. The thing that is really different in this case, we were amazed at SB156 got passed. We thought that was a Herculean effort. And we were very excited about that prospect of utilizing SB156 as a tool to get things done. Those do not exist in other states to the best of my knowledge. There could be a state here or there that does have something equivalent to SB156. But here in California, we did think that was going to be a really worthwhile tool. And up until today, it's been okay, but it hasn't been the catch-all to really accelerate permitting.

Nick Maduros: And can you also just expand a little bit on the sort of overhead lines that you discussed because it does seem if the pole is there and there's already a line and you're just adding another line I think the impact would be minimal.

Dave Daigle: Yes. We share your opinion from ADF's perspective, we have to follow rules all the time. We're in a mission-critical space, but there's also safety and environmental implications related to what we do. In the case of aerial deployments we have existing structure access, pole attachment, and conduit use agreements with all the major utilities here in the state of California. PG&E Southern Cal, Edison, LADWP, SDG&E, and so forth. So, the pole attachments generally what we have to do is get engineering and wind weight loading studies done for the utilities who look at our submissions based on those studies. And once they approve them we are free to attach. We then need to go get a traffic control permit to do that. But these are existing poles in existing right-of-way. So when we have those approvals in hand from those utilities and we need to go get a traffic control permit. We generally do that in parallel. And if a traffic control permit, though, is hung up because it's in Caltrans right of way, and it was designated to need studies of some sort, that confuses us. And so we've had instances like that, but yeah, our opinion is that's a utility piece of equipment that was pre-approved in the Caltrans right-of-way. Yes, we need to have the traffic control permits in place and do all the safety things that we do on a daily basis anyway, but we should be able to attach in a time-efficient, manner.

The Chair: Thank you. Any other committee members that have questions? Alright, I want to thank American Dark Fiber. I know it's always hard to go up first but thank you on behalf of the administration and your partnership Broadband for All on all the partners that are here. As a reminder, we do have 7 partners and always going first means there's a lot of questions and presentation but if at least the presenters could try to stay within the 7 minutes

just to make sure we're all getting through all of the information allowing the members to have enough time but thank you very much. And we'll go ahead and shift to Arcadian and the CEO, Mr. Davis.

Dan Davis: Well, good afternoon. I will try to stay within the time frame, we'll see how we do here. I am a recovering lawyer, which we tend to get paid by the word, so I'm going to struggle with that. Dan Davis, CEO and co-founder of Arcadian Infracom. This is what we do. We were founded in 2018 to build long-haul or middle-mile networks. Some people ask what's the difference between long haul and middle mile? It's kind of a joke. Two and a half middle mile make a long haul. It really is a joke. There's no difference. We connect billion-dollar data centers in LA to billion-dollar data centers in Phoenix for the hyperscalers Microsoft, Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Google. So we're one of those companies that operate at scale. This thousand miles in California is significant. It's part of a plan to build 3,500 miles from Colorado up to the Pacific. And so, take it in the context of this is not all we do, this is an important puzzle piece of what we do. We do this at scale. I've been at this there's something about 30 years, most of us don't know when to retire or stay retired, so I've been at this roughly 30 years as well. This is the second company I've built like this, but I've been very excited about this company and this partnership with California. What's interesting here is we've got an interesting crossover between private incentives and public incentives. In the public side, you're trying to reach a public policy outcome, which is improved broadband. I'm trying to connect LA to Phoenix, which is 500 miles away, and spend four or five hundred million dollars doing it. How do these things meet? Just to give you some context. So, we have to build through, I grew up in the middle of nowhere, Illinois, Pleasant Plains, Illinois. I always give them a plug less than 700 people. Because I have to get from LA to Phoenix and everything in between I build through the middle of nowhere. And then we put these taps into the system to allow small markets to get on the global backbone because what I do is literally build a global backbone. My 12-year-old now understands what I do. When I tell him I build the internet, for those of you who have 12-year-olds, screens and internet is everything to them but that's literally what we do. We dig ditches, and we put this stuff on the ground, and it becomes a global backbone. So when we kind of ran into this program, really in the beginning of 2022 between GSN, it was a perfect fit for us to some extent. Not all 10,000 miles made sense for us. We took that 8, I guess it's 8,000 miles and put it on top of what we had already planned, and there was about 1,000 miles of common interest and that's how we formed this partnership. If you could kind of move forward one slide for everyone. So what you see here on the map is, you see in yellow what is part of this 1,000-mile program. There's also, some other lines on the map. Again, it's about 3,500 miles in total. For example, we go LA to Phoenix if you're only

interested in the California portions, so we contract with the state for that. We're investing several hundred million on top of what the state's investing to get this end-to-end. So, we've got a really nice confluence of public and private interests. Could you move forward one slide, please? So, this is a little bit of history. As I said, beginning of 2022, we engaged with GSN we were introduced to, in the fall of 22, CDT we began those discussions and by February 2023 we did our first deal for about 300 miles. We grew that in the fall of 23 to a total of 1,000, which is where we are now. We grew the infrastructure of the company now to scale up to everything we're doing. We knew permitting was going to take a long time. I didn't imagine it would take this long, but here we are. These are marathons, not sprints. We decided what we tried to do is create some momentum for the program. As we engaged, we realized this was going to be a very long-haul, no pun intended. A very long slog for all of us. And so, through 2024, we did four separate groundbreakings on the four separate routes that we have to create some positive momentum because we knew we all had to hang in here together while the permitting got done. And that was really as much for our public partners here as us to just keep some energy. Let's get something done. As of today, as we sit here in May, actually, we got another permit Tuesday, from what I understand. So we had two Caltrans permits, prior to Tuesday for about 3 miles. We're up to 3 permits for 4 miles. We'll get into a little later of how we think, kind of, our hope for a tsunami of permits and miles comes. But this tends to be how it is. It's a long windup to a pitch. At this point, all we know is we're in the wind-up phase. We'll see, kind of, how fast they come out at this point. For context, out of that 1,000 miles we're building, and we've got about 1,000 miles border to border in California right-of-way, about 90% of that is Caltrans but there's another 10% that is non-Cal Trans. And my colleague's kind of covered that same thing. Just to give you a sense. We have Caltrans as one permitting agency. We have 7 federal permitting agencies on top of that and I would agree those will be the longest, those are 18 to 30 months to get. And then we have 50 more state county, municipal, other state agencies. So it's Caltrans, 7 federal agencies, and 50 other local up to county and state agencies. I just want everybody to understand. And this is like a puzzle. Each one of these 57 pieces is necessary to complete the puzzle. Without one, the puzzles not done. With every 500-mile route, if you have one foot that doesn't connect between LA and Phoenix, LA doesn't connect to Phoenix. Every single one of these is a critical path, so I want to provide some context there beyond just Caltrans, that the complexity that the joint builders are undertaking is fairly enormous. We all did this, sometimes rationally, sometimes irrationally but we all undertook this kind of eyes wide open. I provide on here a map, as I said, this thousand miles is a part of about another 1,450 that reaches into Arizona. It basically reaches to Phoenix, Las Vegas, and Reno because that's where those big data centers

are. So, I remember being on the stage with Director Bailey Crimmins and explaining why did you build to Willits? Why are you going to Arcada of all places? This is a good context because that's where major subsea cable landing stations go. So there will be traffic running through Willits, California that goes to Malaysia and Hong Kong. All over Southeast Asia and all this will happen invisibly under your feet. I give you that example to explain what we're doing is part of a much bigger project. We are here. This is a marathon, not a sprint. Our relationship with you, our state partners, is not until we get done. We're going to operate for this next 40 or 60 years. And we walk into this partnership with that in mind. That let's treat each other, let's be patient, as patient as we can, do we throw rocks at each other every once in a while to get each other's attention? Sure. But do keep in mind, this is not just to get it built. We have to operate this for decades to provide services to all these communities. Can you move forward one slide, please? Here as I said, we've got about 1,000 miles, 90% of it is Caltrans permits, one permitting agency, 57 other permitting agencies for the next 100 miles. Overall, we've got, again, let me update this, 3 permits for 4 miles at this point. Look at that middle chart. What you'll see there, the bars are the numbers of miles that of each month between now and the end of 26th that we need. We have really digitized our entire project management project. We know where every single permit is. We know every foot, how it's going to be built, bore, trench exactly how many. Some of these we've got 4 deep permits permissions from rights-of-way. What you'll see, and has been mentioned earlier, there is kind of a tsunami of need coming here, in August of needing 100 miles. We're sitting at 4 and then July, August and September, we need a lot of miles or permits. Some of these take a very, very long time. Some of these permits are dozens and dozens of miles. Some are a half mile, but we know down fairly precisely, as you can see, what we need and when. So at some point in the next 60 days, the floodgates have to open or we're going to have a different outcome on timelines. Whether that happens or not, I don't know. But what we can tell you is this is what we need to get our 1,000 miles done. I'll provide a little bit of context. We've talked about we've been at this, kind of over 3 years now, three and a half years. I think we were one of the first, if not the first, joint build partners and kind of set that mold for a bunch of other folks that came in. We're glad to do that, because it turned out to be a wonderful relationship, but we did go through two, two and a half years of the QMAP process. We're about 90 days in to then a shift to the CEPS or EPOP process and then now less than 30 days into the third iteration on the rules. So, it's gotten better each time. Can we meet what we need by August and September? I know everybody wants to ask me that. I don't have the answer. It depends on Caltrans and the other agencies but primarily Caltrans, on what they can get through their process and how far or how fast. We go forward one, please. The question was, what has, or really,

what will make us successful? And I touched a bit on it. It's that spirit of partnership. It's knowing we're in this for the long haul. It's trying to align private and incentives and public incentives who don't often lineup. I think we've done a pretty good job on both sides. We've certainly all learned a lot, but the key thing, it is the environmental issue, some of which is state, and some of which is federal. We really need these by the end of July to start kind of pouring out and the bucket to overflow. We are ready for it. All of our contractors are ready. We have the three largest contractors in the U.S. ready to go. We have the materials. We're ready to go when the permits hit. The one thing I'll touch on here if we could move forward one slide. The one thing is that these are a couple of two or three asks or suggestions, and we do provide these suggestions humbly, because these are very complex legal issues. SB156 we've talked about that quite a bit. So there's an exemption from CEQA and there's exceptions to the exemptions that back end. There's 5 of those things in SB156 that say, yes, you're exempt except for these 5 things. And that's kind where I think we've struggled with 156, how that's interpreted across. We work with 6 of the 12 Caltrans districts, how those are interpreted, and these are very complex interpretations. How those are interpreted by each individual district has been fairly uneven. I think they could use some more guidance on when do these apply? We've had to re-fight battles across the six districts again and again. I've run large organizations. It's a communication problem of what District 2 learns, how do you make sure District 7 learns it, so that you can kind of use that learning. It's very hard across a large organization. But that really is, it needs leadership from the top. I understand that the districts are empowered, because that is the best for the safety and control of the asset. The cost of that is it's hard to move information and decisions around that were made in one district to another. I don't have the magic wand or the magic bullet for anyone here. Other than to say, it does require, at this point, a lot of leadership from the top. A lot of written direction of this is exactly how we're going to, this is when we're going to allow trench and pavement. This is when we're going to allow, you don't have to go get a permit for every single handhold, it's slightly different from another, which is the way it works right now. I think there are some of those things that we can work with Donna and others and the other joint builders to come up with a quick hit list of what direction we think can be given to accelerate across 12 districts the same questions are coming up 12 different times across 9 different builders. I know Caltrans wants to do better and they are doing better. I think we can help with some of this if we continue the communication that we've started today and have started in the past. So I really do think we need leadership from the top and a set of rules that says, this is exactly how we're going to interpret these, and district, if you've got a reason not to follow that provide them a clear path of who to go to, how to go to them, and pull it back into the requirement. The answer needs to be yes, unless

somebody can prove it should be no. The reason I say that is we're out of time. The shot clock is up on all of us. It doesn't matter why we got here. This is where we are. We have 18 months to build 4,000 miles. I'm not looking backwards, I'm looking forwards. What do we do to be successful together if we are unsuccessful, we're all going to feel unsuccessful and be seen as unsuccessful. Let's not look back, let's not look for blame. Other than to learn what to not do and to do going forward. Let's go forward one slide, please. And finally, one thing, and I've been kind of ringing this bell for a while. As we get the permits, part of the permit is when we can build what. And this is a just kind of a heads-up or a bell ring for Caltrans and all of us. As you can see, we know over the next 18 months exactly what permit we need and when. When we put a permit in, we tell them exactly the date we're going to start and the date we're going to end. One of the things Caltrans knows they have to do, there's no surprise to them, and I was talking to Donna before. You've got 4,000 miles of build across this state that you're going to try to happen in 18 months, and not entirely disrupt the economy. Every build is going to affect traffic. So, you've got 4,000 miles. I, myself, am going to have 2 or 3 dozen crews out there at a time. That's just me for 1,000 miles. You have 3,000 more miles of build. How are we going to manage this without bringing the economy to a halt? I am sure Caltrans is thinking about this. I don't know if they have the data yet. To make that choice, they have the data from us. We have 96% of our permits sent to Caltrans. But I just point that out for the committee to pay attention to that. That scheduling of what work can happen. Can we work only at night in the Bay Area, so we don't disrupt traffic? We know across the Sierra Nevada's, there's a very short number of weeks every year we can build, and if it starts snowing then we stop until it stops snowing and melts. So there are a lot of factors here that Caltrans has to manage, and the joint builders have to manage. Even after we get the permits, can we possibly get this done in the time we have? And if not, how do we optimize to really get as close as we can? You could move one more slide, and I promise I'm done. If there is one more slide. And there we are. Thankfully not. I appreciate your time.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Davis. I really appreciate again, Arcadian's partnership and we do have Supervisor Starkey who would like to ask a few questions. Supervisor?

Valerie Starkey: Thank you so much. For Arcadian, what specific roadblocks have been for the majority of your permits? Has it been for the Caltrans ones? Because I find it interesting that your Caltrans ones you have zero miles permits or 3 permits for 4 miles, but you're non-Caltrans one, you're 10% of your project has doubled that. I find that interesting, but what is the common thread of why they're saying that they cannot get you these permits? Is it NEPA?

Dan Davis: Yeah. Yeah, it's environmental concerns. When I built out much of North America with folks like Dave and some of my colleagues. We really didn't have NEPA back then 20 - 25 years ago, it really was not as robust. I'd say it's environmental permitting, whether it's state or federal. In California you have state as well that is unusual. But if there's a word for it, it's the environmental permitting.

Valerie Starkey: Okay, because then you also mentioned, and this is a common concern that I've heard from other partners is that consistency between districts, how they're interpreting those CEQA specifics. So that turns my question to Caltrans. Are you working? I know that recently you have been trying to have more communication amongst the 12 districts, but are you trying to streamline that? So, for someone like Arcadian that has builds in, and you said 6 different districts because they're running a business, too. How are they going to be able to say, okay, it doesn't work in this district, but it works in this district? So what does Caltrans doing with regard to getting that consistency amongst all your districts.

Janice Benton: Yeah, so we are communicating with the districts, often and frequently. Like we said, through the strike teams, through other communications, through our weekly meetings we're having with each district individually. We do put this written guidance in writing and send it out to the districts. I will say, I think one of the questions, and I appreciate the comment on this one from Arcadian is, it's maybe not necessarily the interpretation of where SB156 applies, but on what type of scope of work it applies. So pulling fiber through existing conduit that's one piece. But building new infrastructure, trenching, boring new conduit under the ground. That's different. So, there is continued conversations and communication happening with the districts to confirm when we're just doing, handholds, or we're doing pulling fiber in existing conduits. We're continuing to communicate with the districts on when certain requirements trigger.

Dan Davis: Yeah, I let me let me build on that. Thank you for the, if I may. I think at this point again, the shot clock has run out. We have 18 months, it doesn't matter how we got here. So, we may need to all be a little more flexible. Do we need to run through the 10-item checklist every single time or can someone down at the district exercise discretion and say you know what, it's one hand hole every quarter mile, and it's a bore which doesn't affect the surface. Is there really enough of an impact to run through NEPA, right? Or CEQA? Like, I think that's where we're at the point where some discretion empowerment down and to exercise some discretion at this late date, is there some way we

can get comfortable with protecting the environment and cultural resources. On such a shot clock. I do think that it just needs to be a mindset shift of, start it yes, unless no. Do we want to protect the environment and cultural resources? Absolutely. But I think that each one of these needs to look at and go look, is there a material environmental impact or not? And if there's not, maybe there's a different path. It's something to consider. We do humbly suggest that, but we're just looking for answers here in the short time we have.

Valerie Starkey: And I just want to finish up with, I know Caltrans is just feeling, like you're very attacked here, and that's not my intention as much as it is how can we keep moving forward and get this done. So, I really appreciate your time, and I hope my questions aren't feeling too targeted. As much as we need to make sure that we fix what maybe has been broken. So that we can move this forward.

The Chair: Thank you, Supervisor. Are there any other members that have questions? All right, I don't see any so thank you very much Mr. Dan Davis from Arcadian. The next step is CVIN, and we have Mr. Stewart.

Mike Stewart: Hi there. Thank you very much for having us here. I'm Mike Stewart. I'm a director at CVIN we also go by Vast Networks. I have David Nelson, our President and CEO, with me as well. You could go to the first line. One more. And so we were established in 1996, we hold a CPCN like the other presenters here today. We are a certificated telephone company. In the state of California, we currently have about 3,000 miles of infrastructure across 28 counties in California. In 2010, we won a BTOP grant and basically about 1,400 miles across California at that time and as part of that 300 miles of it was in Caltrans right-of-way. We were one of the topmost successful BTOP grant recipients creating a company that has been very sustainable. And has continued to grow and add thousands of miles to our network over the years. Next slide. So in August, we leased 2,700 miles approximately of 288 count fiber to CDT. We are strictly leasing fiber to the state. We're not a joint build partner in which kind of the state of California will have any ownership in that infrastructure. So this is the exact infrastructure that we put in on a daily basis as a telephone company. As we went through the negotiations with CDT and had these contract discussions then we talked about how Caltrans was going to have a streamlined process and how cooperative they were going to be and we were a little skeptical. We've dealt with Caltrans before, but we went into this as optimistic as anyone could be and it has turned out to be a bit of a struggle. We spent 18 months basically going through as they rolled out this QMAP process and as part of that they wanted right-of-way agreement and all kinds of things that are totally inappropriate for public utility. We have the legal

right to install infrastructure in the public right-of-way as part of our CPCN and so they were putting a lot of things in the two-party agreements, the MLAs and SLA agreements. They just were not appropriate for a certificated public utility. So we spent 18 months going back and forth with Caltrans arguing those points, saying that QMAP doesn't apply, two-party agreements don't apply to us. And during that 18-month period, the reason that you're seeing the snowball of applications since February is as we're going through we could not submit or we could submit, but Caltrans wouldn't review permits without a two-party agreement. That was an agreement that they were requiring. We went through to provide tons of information, lots of meetings to develop those two-party agreements, and once we saw it we pushed back. So, that's why that 18-month period was kind of a loss. It was a loss period as we kind of went through this process and in February of 2025, all of those requirements were removed. And we got to where we are today, and all permits have been being entered in as quickly as we can. There are certain ones we were waiting on survey permits and things like that which we have survey permits to be able to go out and do the environmental studies and such so those permits are being put in on a daily basis. Next slide. So, we have basically 1,450 miles on Caltrans right-of-way. Some of that's existing network, some of that's new construction. We have 1,261 miles off Caltrans and again it's a combination of new and existing. Of that we've received a couple crossing permits, we did receive some vault replacement permits in the last week kind of since this slide deck was created so there's progress being made. Off Caltrans we've already completed 340 miles we have 492 miles currently permitted and under construction so over 830 miles off Caltrans that is permitted under construction basically 66% of the miles. Then we need to build off Caltrans before we have a single longitudinal permit from Caltrans and so I think that's a good indication that we know what we're doing. We can get permits from all of these municipalities and it's just not moving at the pace we need to, when it comes to Caltrans. Next slide. What's made it successful? We've been doing this for decades. We work with all types of permitting agencies we have staff, we have consultants that are working with us. This is what we do, and so we know how to get it done. We don't have the type of issues with other permitting agencies typically that we have with Caltrans. We'll get hundreds of miles of permits without a single meeting with a municipality. A couple emails back and forth and we'll make a change, and they'll issue the permit. Caltrans permits right now are taking a lot of work, and Caltrans is really trying, and they want to communicate but it's a lot of meetings for every permit. And so we only have so much time to get all of this work done. We have the materials, the contractors, the experience to get this job done and be efficient. Now, again, we've done thousands of miles in rural areas extending infrastructure to underserved communities, since 2010. So, we

are not new to this ballgame. Next slide, I think he went the wrong way. Back one. There should be another slide after that.

The Chair: That's the only slides we have.

Mike Stewart: Oh, well, I have I have one more.

The Chair: Okay, go ahead and we can leave it on the slide, if you could just speak to it.

Mike Stewart: Yeah, absolutely. So, what do we need to try to get this done? We want to continue to work with Caltrans, but we need to limit their review to right-of-way protection. What is going to protect the safety of the right-of-way. As a public utility again, we have the legal right to install infrastructure in a public right-of-way. Caltrans often spends too much time reviewing a design or very specific information that I think is not necessary or appropriate. If we're installing conduit and we've noted the infrastructure that they think is critical, such as culverts and waterways and bridges and those types of things. Some of the other small details shouldn't be necessary. Because we've got a lot of miles between all of the partners to get done in a short period of time. We all build this professionally, we call 811 Locates, we go out, we pothole before we dig to make sure that we don't hit other infrastructures. It's not necessary to have every utility and everything on the plans to get this project moving. I think that we've got to affirm the CEQA and NEPA exemptions for utility broadband. Clarify, we still don't agree that NEPA should be triggered when there's no federal action unless it's on federal lands or an interstate, we think that there is case law out there. Caltrans is, continues to claim that it's due to past or future federal funding is why NEPA is being triggered. There's already case law that's been established saying that NEPA isn't triggered based on past or future funding. And so, we do think that there's some wiggle room to not necessarily evoke NEPA on everything on this project. And then a lot of these others is similar comments the executive authority from headquarters down to the districts. it does seem to be interpreted differently for various districts. Perfect example of that, where we have existing infrastructure, we are increasing the size of the vault basically 2 feet larger in each size, is the area we need to excavate. When we originally installed that vault the hole was much larger than that and so we're just trying to get a permit to go and basically put a larger box in because the higher fiber count requires it. We've got districts that are approving them, no problem. We've got other districts that are now asking us to do tribal consultations to dig another foot around a vault that we would have had NEPA clearance on in 2010-14 when we did this originally. So a lot of it is busy work. Some districts are requiring environmental work for vault

replacements others aren't and so it's just not a consistent experience across the board. And then just I think all of the builders need some field flexibility. Broadband projects are very simple there's very minimal disturbance. But as we get out there in the field we're going to find infrastructure that we didn't know about, so we need to have the flexibility to move that line a few feet in either direction while we're out in the field without having to stop and go and get a permit revision. Because it's going to be necessary and that's the only way we're going to get this built is if there's some field flexibility that'll allow us to avoid things, go deeper, go one-side or the other. And then we need milestones in order for us to complete this project we need basically 150 to 200 miles per month in Caltrans permit, starting basically now, with all permits issued by the end of December. This window is rapidly closing that would allow us to complete this Project by December of 2026. So, we need a regular cadence of hundreds of miles coming out each month so that we can make progress, get the boots on the ground, and get these projects going.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Stewart. I will open it up to any members for any questions. I see none on the dais. Any online? All right, Supervisor Starkey.

Valerie Starkey: Mine are just going to be repetitive at this moment, so it's the same questions. So I don't want you to think that I don't have them, but they're going to be very repetitive, and I think Caltrans is hearing the need.

The Chair: Thank you, Supervisor. Is there any other questions from any of the members? Yes.

Nick Maduros: Can I just ask one question? You mentioned something about expanding the vault by a foot or something. So is that a separate permitting process to just dig out one extra foot of soil I mean, I guess, I don't know how deep it is.

Mike Stewart: So, we've been working with Elias, and I know the strike team's been looking at it. So this is existing infrastructure. We need to slightly enlarge those vaults. We think we should be allowed to do that under our current maintenance permit. We have annual maintenance permits with Caltrans. Caltrans has yet to agree that we're allowed to do that, but this is such minor. We are going in and having to submit, not permits for each individual vault, but let's say a 10-mile section has 40 vaults that we need to increase the size. We'll go in and we'll submit a permit for a section in a county, say a highway 140 and whatever county. That would be the permit application that we submit and we're doing the environmental checklist, we're doing no-effects memos for bio, doing cultural searches. There's a lot going into that that I think is

unnecessary, costly, and it's just delaying us from being able to get the fiber in the ground.

Nick Maduros: Thank you. Can I ask one question on Caltrans? Earlier, for the segments that you did, did you do the studies in-house, the cultural studies, the environmental or did you contract that out?

Janice Benton: Most often, it's by our own staff but sometimes we supplement our staff work with consultants, but they're doing it on our behalf.

The Chair: Thank you. I have a question. Mr. Stewart, I know you've been meeting with Caltrans a lot over the last few months. Maybe, maybe just telling all of us, is there been some movement? I know there's been discussion on how to streamline on traffic management and other things, maybe I know we've talked about kind of what you need, but maybe what you think that you've heard where there's been progress being made from the administration to help move this thing forward since you are our largest partner.

Mike Stewart: Yep. No, and there are incredibly helpful people in Caltrans and there have been. We think that we're within weeks of getting our first longitudinal permit out of District 6, so we have been getting a ton of support. And so, things have been going better, I would say, over the last month. They have been drafting some traffic management plans for approval which is certainly making it easier because they understand what they're going to accept in there right away. And we're also getting some assistance on the encroachment exception letters and so, we are not saying that Caltrans is not putting the effort into it. They certainly are it's just it's a big, big ship and turning that ship is difficult. There's really good people in Caltrans, but sometimes I think they they're having trouble, one, getting out of their own way, and two, recognizing that broadband projects are mentally evasive. This isn't a civil construction project, it's not a road work project, and so they're just continuing to make it more complicated than it probably needs to be.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Stewart. All right, any questions one last call for CVIN, again, thank you. You are again, the largest so we appreciate that because that of the miles to get to 8,000 miles of community we are very happy to have partnered with you so thank you very much.

Mike Stewart: Thank you.

The Chair: The next group up, and I'm very excited we have two tribes, first one up is Yurok Telecommunications. We have Dan Jon Walton representing our

tribal partners, so I will go ahead, and I know they are participating virtually so I'll go ahead and turn it over to him. Apologies he's actually in the room, so thank you.

Jon Walton: Normally, I'm virtually, but I thought I would come down. So, thank you for having me. John Walton, Chief Executive Officer of Yurok Telecommunications. I will say, as a previous civil servant, and I appreciate everyone's service. I hated PowerPoints and I still hate PowerPoints. I did prepare one because I was requested to. I'm not a fan of reading my PowerPoints to other people so I will assume you have looked at it or will look at it. I always like to really just talk to people based on what I'm hearing in the conversation and following a really big partner and being a small partner I will say that the themes are similar so I'm just going to tell some stories. Because I came here, and my staff warned me not to say anything negative because we just got our permit and so they don't want me to say anything that could somehow upset that. But on the other hand there's some significant challenges I can see the states trying to overcome and if you take our small project I can only imagine for these big partners how that's magnified. So I'm going to go through my slides very quickly. Probably in 2 minutes. And then I'm just going to tell you some stories and if you want to ask me some questions, but I don't think there's any surprising in anything I'm going to say, so next slide, please. Yurok Telecommunications is wholly owned by the Yurok Tribe, which is located in Northern California for those of you that aren't familiar with it, there's been some questions about industry expertise or experience. I wouldn't compare myself to some of the other telecommunications experts, but to just give you a sense, I'm a native Californian, I lived in this area. I have a degree in environmental science from what used to be Humboldt State University now Cal Poly Humboldt. I spent 30 years as a CIO of the City of San Francisco, City of San Jose, and San Mateo County. So I think I'm pretty familiar with public sector processes and requirements in a very sensitive political area having said that, next slide, please. I just want to say that we have many projects going on simultaneously. So, one thing that's unique about our Aryan project is if you've been to the North Coast, what they like to call the Lost Coast. Is, there's really nothing up there now. It's great that the submarine landing's coming into Eureka, where my house is, I'm very excited but we're trying to do four projects simultaneously. So for us, the Middle Mile project's very important and we're very proud and happy to be a partner with the state on that but we're also doing a big NTIA project which has lots of federal requirements. We're doing a CPUC project and we're also just doing private contracts for other entities, some other tribal partners in the area because we all share borders and common areas, next slide, please. These are just 3 small maps like I said it's not a big area, less than 50 miles total of what we're building for you all as part of

your project, but we're proud to say it's probably a very critical connection. If you've ever been in this area there's no other way to get north to south except along the Highway 101 corridor, or up through 96. So, even though our area isn't large we feel like this is a really important project, next slide, please. So, like I said not a typically long area, but a very challenging geologic area and I will say this from, if you've ever been up there between the redwood trees, which we don't want to disturb, one of my jobs right out of college was mapping all the endangered species habitat so I'm very sensitive to being sensitive to those things. And the fact that we from our standpoint, need to start working August. So we started the process very early we need to get done sooner rather than later because some of our other joint projects need to get done by June of next year, so we don't have as much time as everyone else does. And again, if you've been in this area when I say we have 12 months left to go, we probably really only have 6 or 8 if you're familiar with the weather up there and some of the things. So we're very happy we have our permit, but we do have some challenges if we can go to the next slide, please. This is just kind of repetitive. We're just talking about some of our start dates. Next slide, please. This is a very short area, but very important. If you ever want to ask me questions about the Weitchpec area I'm happy to answer it. It looks like a very short section, but I think some of your other presenters coming up Nick, Siskiyou, and Hoopa will tell you this is a very important and short segment. Next slide, please. So, I just want to talk about some of the facts and you've already heard this from pretty much all the other partners. We started the permitting process about 20 months ago with DOT. So when you talk about industry standards with all due respect to my ex-partners from the state when I was a municipal CIO, this is exactly the reason I never did any joint projects with the state. I built fiber and towers all over the Bay Area. And we intentionally avoided any routes where we needed to get state permits because we can get Local permits from municipalities, counties, and cities, in 6 to 8 months at the most, even when the process is very onerous. After I retired from government I started a national telecommunications consulting firm for a tribe. We do permitting and engineering or did before I joined YTEL all over the country. States like Washington, Kansas, we could pull right-of-way permits for state highways in two to four months. Start to finish. So, we understand California's complex. Like I said, I'm a native. So, spent most of my life here except when my dad was moving us around with the military, so kind of come and gone a little bit. But it has been an onerous process. We had to do NEPA because part of our project is funded by the feds. It took us about 14 months to complete our NEPA process in this area. So, I know some of the other partners are having issues with NEPA, and I can understand why given the size and complexity of their projects. But for us the state BOT project, to get that permit has been the hardest. And we're happy to have it now but we're starting to run into some issues still. So, next

slide, please. First I want to acknowledge the success. I do have to say, there are like everyone has said, very dedicated District 1 DOT staff. We have one arguably two permits that's all we had to pull, so when I look at these other partners I can't imagine the complexity they're going through. And we really appreciate all the hard work District 1 staff has done also CDT has been a fantastic partner. If it wasn't for them helping us push things through the state process we wouldn't be where we're at. But having said that, I think the themes you're hearing are I think what our experience has been, and it has improved, but it's probably for us, only to improved significantly in the last 4 or 5 months. So, like some of the other partners said for us as a business that has limited funds, that are limited sometimes by grant, sometimes by contracts, time is money. So, I don't know how the other companies are addressing it, but we've had an experience where lawyers have to be involved, multiple consulting staff have to be involved, we have weekly meetings with DOT. I don't hammer on people too much in meetings but every meeting costs money for me. When I have to have staff attend it and we have meeting after meeting after meeting with no outcomes or results that's all money. So it's time loss, its money lost. We did have issues early on with DOT before they were better organized. We had to redesign bridge attachments 3 times because we were given 3 different standards to design to. So, that was time and money for us. That was an issue that we've overcome that we're happy to overcome now. But we're still running into issues now. There's new now that we have the permit we're being told by Caltrans staff on the ground there's a new surveying requirement that we have to comply with. And so, we've escalated the issue. But if the District 1 local staff enforce what they say is the DOT requirement for surveying. It's going to delay our project another 3 months and over \$500,000. So, it's those types of things that are coming up at the last minute that there's no way for us to accommodate those delays given the time is out, really, for us. And if we go back to the state now and say another agency has imposed a new requirement that's going to cost us \$500,000, we don't think the state's got the money to cover that. So, I think like all the other partners said, we're definitely at the tipping point. Where I think all the other partners are still trying to pull permits and start construction. We're trying to start construction. So, maybe we're going to be the canary in the coal mine about what happens when you really start intensively doing construction at a fast pace. So I had some other notes but I'm going to try to be respectful of the time and let you all answer some questions.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Walton. Thank you for bringing a prior service and thank you for also helping put context into what the tribal partners who have been very valuable. I've gone through and congratulations on getting your permit. We do all want to open it up for questions for any of the members?

Do I see any online? All right, Secretary Maduros.

Nick Maduros: Not a question, but I just want to echo the thanks for your presentation and providing some context for what can otherwise be charts and other things. It's helpful to hear the real-life experience of particularly a tribal entity trying to navigate this so thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Secretary. Any other questions? All right, I see none. I will appreciate I grew up in Mendocino County, Willits, California, so not quite all the way up to Crescent City but do know the area, love the redwoods and have driven those roads many times, so I do appreciate you bringing broadband to those, those areas. So, thank you.

Jon Walton: Thank you.

The Chair: All right, oh yeah Supervisor Starkey, yes sorry.

Valerie Starkey: Can I just add one thing? I'm thrilled. I'm in Del Norte County, and so I'm so thrilled that this is coming up in our way. And I went through Oreck recently and I've seen the supplies starting to stack there so we do appreciate the work that you're about to accomplish.

Jon Walton: Thank you. We're very excited. That's where our headquarters is going to be when you see the vacant lot across from all the fiber piled up and work, that's our new headquarters so we're very excited to kind of bring both the technology and revitalize the economy in that area thank you.

The Chair: Thank you. All right, we now have or are lucky enough to have the Hoopa Valley Public Utilities District. Linnea Jackson who's also been a great partner and advocate. Has been on a few of our videos she's a little bit of a star so I'd love to introduce her and let her present.

Linnea Jackson: Good afternoon, everybody. First, I wanted to thank the Advisory Committee, our Joint Build partners, and the stakeholders. I'm very impressed by the presentations. There's a wide array of Joint Build partners that are helping build out the state's goals if you could go to the next slide, please. So, a little bit about myself. My name's Linnea Jackson. I'm a member of the Hoopa Valley Tribe. I serve as the general manager of our tribal utility just to understand HOOPA Public Utilities were a chartered entity of the Hoopa Valley Tribe. We were established in 1982. We provide critical utilities such as water, construction services, solid waste management, broadband, and energy. So we're really the foundation of providing those critical services within our tribal

region and I wanted to state that we're proud to be a joint partner. It's very impressive to hear some of the other joint builders that are building out thousands of miles and just like my colleague at YTel, Mr. Walton said, that even though we have a small build it is absolutely a critical part of the state, that has had a lack of investment due to the rural nature, due to the smaller population where there's maybe less of a return of investment but this is absolutely a critical piece to the state's infrastructure and the ring that we're serving. Next slide, please. A little bit about our build, it's approximately, just under 23 miles it starts at the beginning of Willow Creek which is the juncture of Highway 299 and 96. We're building along State Highway 96 to the Yurok border again, which is approximately 23 miles. A little of these pictures you can see that we have sometimes a rock cliff face on one side and a steep incline to the river on the next. So, we have a challenging build from a topography and geology standpoint so although we have a smaller build there's a lot of challenges that come with that. We were the first tribe to enter into a joint build agreement with CDT and that was executed in August of '23. Throughout the process it's hard going first, right? Because you talk about those challenges. I know the state had an ambitious goal ultimately, to build out 10,000 and now 8,000 miles but was starting at the very beginning. It was almost like the process was being developed as we went along it took another almost a year to enter into that two-party agreement with Caltrans. So we executed joint build in August of '23, and in June of '24 we then executed the two-party agreement which that process has now been rescinded. So I wanted to talk a little bit about that, and we'll go to the next slide, if you would. So, if you're looking at a small and mighty team you're looking at those legal resources that are needed, you're looking at your technical partners, your design-build. So to have a process in place with QMAP and then to get the joint build guidance later after the agreement was executed you're constantly moving the end goal which allows us and requires us to have to pivot through those processes so it was like an ever-changing process of what the requirement would actually be. So that again, is an investment of resources, investment of time, and legal review project management status. And so, we are doing our best to meet what those requirements are set for but throughout this whole process is those have those have changed and that created an issue. We're now within the CEPS process so that Council the two-party agreement it canceled some of the other requirements with the engineering status. We've had some issues with the insurance policies that are required of tribes that the \$20 million policy that was required throughout the length of the project build which is an additional 40 years. Those things were unknown because it was a Caltrans process as opposed to a joint build process with the agreement with CDT. So again, those creative challenges of being able to facilitate this project again being a tribal boundaries, I know that some of you are the joint builders talked about we're

just building within the right-of-way we should have absolutely to do that. But I wanted to highlight that the state of California has 109 federally recognized tribes, many tribal boundaries. HOOPA has one of the largest land bases in the state of California. And once you cross those boundaries there's other jurisdictions and there's other approvals that are needed including tribal government approvals, required consultation. It wouldn't be SHPO, it's actually our TIPO and our internal process. So, those cultural resource impact studies, environmental studies are absolutely critical and required when you enter into tribal lands. And that applies, throughout the state of California. So I just kind of wanted to highlight some of those things with the changes in process. We've stepped up to the challenge and met those, but again, that was challenging and time intensive. Next slide, please. So, we're all developing this and we're all learning how to work together from large builders to smaller builders and with tribal nations as well. Some of the things that have been a challenge is that there's always required to be a limited waiver of sovereign immunity. Some of those processes aren't set up for tribal governments and tribal providers. If the pandemic taught us anything is that connectivity is absolutely required and some of those processes that have struggled are the rural and tribal nations. So buildouts and this middle mile and open access network is absolutely critical to tribal nations. And so, I think moving forward, there needs to be policy and regulatory considerations for those tribal builders that will help maintain these rural and remote areas not only for tribal sovereignty but for self-sustainability. We're looking to train and be those dedicated boots on the ground. The Arcadian CEO mentioned, like, why are we building to Arcada? And we're the exact people that they're building to. So we're relying on that large-scale long-haul connectivity so we have options so we have redundancy and resiliency, and we can have other access to sorry, cheaper prices for internet so we can be sustainable to meet the broadband for all because that's the ultimate goal here is to be able to provide resilient, reliable, and affordable connectivity for California, and that's exactly what we're trying to do. Next slide, please. So, with the milestones I mentioned that we've issued our RFP, we've selected our contractor, Glass Roots Construction. Glass Roots actually did a local build on Digital 299 which went from the north coast all the way to Cottonwood. So, the reason why they were selected is because they have local experience they understand the geology the remote locations in Northern California and ultimately, it seemed a good alignment with them. We had our project kickoff call recently, next Thursday, we are having our kickoff call as a requirement with Caltrans and our contractor. We expect to start construction in June so those are all positive things. We were issued our encroachment permit through Caltrans. And I will say that I have seen dedication with Caltrans, with our CDT partners who have helped make this a success. So, I did want to commend our partners. I think we all have a heavy lift with the ambitious goals that we're

trying to achieve as joint builders within the region and the state. So I did want to commend them for that partnership. I think there's some growing pains and ways this could have been streamlined including some of the other permitting. We had to gain CEQA category exemption and NEPA categorical exemption as well. We had a Northern Pond Turtle that was listed so we have mitigation measures on the environmental side that we have to adhere to. Cultural and biological monitoring processes, community engagement, traffic control plans. And some of the upcoming successes that we have is we're going to have a groundbreaking ceremony with CDT and some of our critical partners. I would love for you all to attend and pre-construction meetings, meetings, all of that. And I wanted to assure the advisory committee and our stakeholders because we are spending critical money, that we are going to meet the deadlines for the build prior to 12 of '26, probably before that, and we look forward to being a strong partner and managing this network on behalf of us all for the coming decades. The Hoopa Valley Tribe, we've been here for 10,000 years and we will still be here, and we look forward to being a really, really strong partner and then we can go to the last slide. This just lets you know that we are surrounded by a beautiful mountains. I wanted to thank, again, the state of California for stepping up and recognizing the need for tribal builders for smaller partners to have a piece in this so we can build out those areas that have not been reached in the past. And we look forward to making this a success and being a strong partner were needed. So, thank you very much for the time. I'd be happy to entertain any questions.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Jackson, and I know we've also talked in addition to the broadband this is actually bringing employment and opportunity. The tribe is actually maintaining a lot of this, moving forward, so being very self-sufficient so we really just appreciate overall I know being first sometimes is difficult but sometimes it also is a great opportunity and great honor so thank you for your partnership from the beginning, and today, and your commitment for meeting the timeline. So, I know it's not easy, but it also takes leadership on your part as well. So thank you, Ms. Jackson. I will like to open it up to any of the committee members if they have any questions. Okay, anyone online? I don't see any, so thank you so much, Ms. Jackson. I look forward to our groundbreaking coming up here soon and with that, we'll go ahead. We have two more partners that we will be that we'll be presenting today. We have Siskiyou Tel with us is Russ Elliott.

Russ Elliott: Yes, thank you. Good afternoon, can you hear me okay? Fantastic! Thank you, Chair Bailey-Crimmins and team there at the committee members. Appreciate the opportunity to come and speak and you always put me after the super rock star, Linnea there. Those mountains that you showed we're just

on the other side of those mountains. We're up here in northern Siskiyou County. And helping to create some connectivity back through the Karuk and the Yurok and over to the Hoopa and John's group over there on the Yurok side we're excited to be here. I'm Russ Elliott I'm the CEO here of Siskiyou Telephone. I'm not the smart guy up here I'm just the face of the company. The smart guys are all the people doing all the work on the permitting and everything. I'm going to talk a little bit about it. And hopefully kind of go a little bit with John to where we talk a little bit more about the, there's a lot of past stuff here that we can talk about, and I think you heard it, and I don't know that we need to reiterate it but what I will do is talk about some of those opportunities for our future success. I come to the state, I've only been here about 4 years as the CEO of this company, but I come from the background of public policy as well. I stood up the broadband offices for Governor Inslee in the state of Washington, I stood up the broadband office for the state of Wyoming for Governor Gordon there. So I've had some public policy side and before that I was a CELC guy for about 20 years in the early 90s and through 2000, had my own CELC and sold that. Have some experience there on the CLEC side have some experience on the policy side. Now, I'm on the ILEC side, where Siskiyou Telephone, first slide, please, second slide, please. Look, we're going to get through this fast. Siskiyou Telephone is an incumbent carrier of last resort. You hear a lot about that now in the legislature because there's some concern around that. We're not wearing away from carrier last resort, we're actually leaning into it. We love serving the people that we serve up here in very rural western Siskiyou County 2,400 square miles, 7 exchanges that we have up here. There's only 4 people per square mile, so, equivalent to Alaska as far as its frontier status and how we have to build networks over that. We've been doing this for 130 years. We're pretty good at it. And we want to brag about the success that a lot of our success is because of our partnership with Caltrans. Because of our partnership with the federal agencies, because of our partnerships with the tribes, because of the partnerships that we create up here and the efficiencies we've brought to this. And we build network, and we do it really, really well. As a matter of fact, you're not going to find another incumbent in this state that's adds fiber to the home built out as Siskiyou Telephone. We're over 83% fiber to the home in our seven serving territories. That includes a territory with no commercial power. They have fiber to the home. And we provide all the services to those folks. So we've done the heavy lifting up here, and we love it, and we want to continue to do it. And to Linneas' comment around local investment, a company like ours is critical to this area because it is putting local people to work. It is bringing jobs. It is bringing opportunity, it's bringing economic development. And it's so critical that we can't forget that. As we start to talk on a national level about being technologically agnostic and handing money over to multinational

corporations. Don't forget the local investments and what that does for the local communities. And the givebacks that they give to schools and libraries and scholarships and community events and all those things. I wasn't going to talk about that but the opportunity to talk about it, I think, is now. That you are investing in. So this MMBI, it was easy for me. As a matter of fact, I'm going to brag. I think I was first. Now, I know there's been some conversation about other people being first. But my conversation started with Erik Hunsinger back in 2021. Around being a partner because when I got here, I thought, that's critical. States need to work with incumbent providers because it's going to be key for these rural areas that otherwise don't have any kind of real return on investment. So we have to have those conversations. So, I came to the table, Erik and I had great conversation at Golden State Network, we continue those conversations, and we inked a deal early, early on in '22. So, we've had this deal in place, we've started the engineering, I've got great partners. Let's go to the next slide so I don't get too, I want to go through this pretty quick. Currently, our MMBI project is 162 total miles, 163 total miles. Of which, 90 of it are on the Caltrans right-of-way, 73 of it are off the Caltrans right-of-way. We have no miles complete yet, but don't be alarmed because much of this 76 of the miles are in our existing infrastructure. That was a beautiful nature of the partnership. We've built in a lot of these rural areas. This is not easy building up here. This is some state highways, this is county roads, this is city streets, this is mountain roads, this is single-lane mountain roads. And this was boring through mountains on single-lane mountain roads, right? With the cliffs falling off into the ocean, like Linnea showed you. There was rocks on one side, cliffs on the other. So, this is not for the faint of heart, but we do it, and we do it really, really well. And we have been doing it really well with a good partnership that we have with Caltrans and our federal and state and local partners. So, we have 76 miles built. We finally got that permitted just recently and I'm proud to say that of that existing miles we're just pulling some 288 count fiber and some conduit through there. We're ready to rock and roll. We finally got a permit on that. Now, it's taken a little while. I'm not going to go back on all why and what, and how that happened. It took us a long time to get tele transit to the table, so I'll reiterate that. We had to give them a deposit of \$500,000 to get them to come and even have a conversation with us. To start the joint build discussion. So, it has taken us a long time. But I will tell you, the tide has turned, and I don't know if it's a lot of the pressure that's coming from this type of effort right now. But the tide has turned, and we are getting a lot of collaboration, a lot of conversation with Caltrans right now. And we're feeling some success, so we are feeling an opportunity to start moving that forward. Of the 76 miles that's pre-existing, we'll have that done by October. So I feel good. Half our project should be done by October. That's win. Hard part's still left to do, right? We've got all the new construction to do. We've got a big challenge in our new construction with

regard to some of the things that some of the other partners, I'll get to that in a minute. Next slide, please. Benefit, I don't is that us? I don't think that's me.

The Chair: That was a slide, that was for CVIN, so okay, there we go.

Russ Elliot: There, that's hey, there we go. Hey, there's the CVIN slide. Here's some success factors right now we did get an approval, finally, May 6th, to do work in our existing right-of-way and as you've heard from others, as a right-of-way because we're a utility. We had to wrestle with this one a little bit more than I thought we would. We have an existing right-of-way, we have an agreement. They said because we're pulling new conduit through and new fiber for somebody else it's going to go through a whole other permitting process. Whereas if we were just doing it for ourselves, there'd have been no permit. But I think we finally got past that. That took a few months to get past that. And so they're now allowing us to just pull that through on our existing agreement. Now, if we have to penetrate the ground because there's been a maybe a fault in the conduit, which we don't anticipate, but we'll have to go through another environmental phase for each one of those if we have to do that. So that might create some challenges. Our contractor's been chosen for this. The work is to begin, and again, I said it'll end in October. We have great partners. Bonfire is our engineering, it's a group out of Colorado. Stantec Environmental, doing a lot of environmental they do all the environmental up here for Caltrans anyway. They're doing work for us right now. North Sky Builders are going to be doing some work for us and there's just been a lot of other contractors come to the table. And said, hey, we're interested when it's time. We'd like to do it, but we can't get those bids out until we have all the final a final approval so we're working on that. I want to just reiterate, we have a community tie, and we have a proven track record of building network. Decades of it up here, and we do it really, really well. Next slide, please. For us to meet these deadlines, right, the 2026, it's going to be a huge, huge lift because we don't have the permits yet. We're only looking for two permits, one for our existing right-of-way, and the other one for the build. We're in some challenges right now with regard to 1.8 miles of our existing 90-mile build, it goes through a little section of BLM. And BLM is requiring what is called a full environmental assessment. And thus is kind of kicking into we can't play in the categorical exclusion for the environmental assessment. So, that's causing the whole thing to be delayed. I'm working with Caltrans and they're working with me now diligently about could we separate this? There's no real precedent for that, so we'd kind of be cutting new teeth with this, but it's something we should we need to think about, because I could have started building in some of my areas a year and a half ago, right? And unfortunately, because it took so long

to get us the conversation started. We missed a lot of this environmental-sensitive area opportunities, seasonal environmental stuff. You have to have a spring one, you have to have a winter one, you have to have fall. So, we had to we kind of missed some of those windows and we missed all of 2024, we missed all of most of 2025 right now. So here we sit now looking at the 18 month and we face some of those weather issues up here. We've got mountains, as up here, big ones. And it snows and we've been lucky these last couple years where we've been able to build through the winter. And if we can maintain that and we can get all of our permits done before the 1st of July, I think we can meet the 26th deadline. If we can't I'm going to be the first to state probably not. So, that's where we're at right now, we've got some challenges with regard to environmental work that had to be done based on the seasonal stuff, so that's being delayed. It was delayed, so can't do anything about it now, we're in the middle of it right now, so we're finishing those environmentals. Saw the guys climbing around on the mountains in their yellow jackets and picking through shrubs and digging into the rocks and stuff, so they're working on it right now but we're really critical on this July deadline in order for us to think that we can meet that 2026 deadline. So we've got to look at some hopefuls that we can do that. The maintenance agreement sounds like that might be happening. Again, you've heard everybody talk about this new process that the MMBN brought to the table. It's actually created a lot of extra work and a lot of extra costs, and a lot of extra confusion. And we would, like everybody else, like to see this just go back to pre-MMBN efficiencies that they brought to it. And I will tell you right now, it's something that's really bothered me, and I had a meeting with Caltrans yesterday about this. As a rate of return carrier up here that has to continue to do construction, that's how I make my money, right? I make reimbursements from the federal and state government by doing construction in telecom. I am now being held to another higher level of standard on my internal work for rate of return stuff that I've always had the 30-to-60-day approval rate with Caltrans. They have now changed those to my internal work. Along with my external work, along with this joint-built stuff I'm doing. So I feel like I'm being penalized now, and I've told them this and they've acknowledged it that this new as-built thing that you just heard about where they're requiring licensed surveying every 50 feet. We already do all that stuff. We create all that. We inspect all that. We have to do that, right? The new residential engineering and residential engineering assistance that have to come along. That's creating additional costs. Those people are being, they're overseeing the inspectors that we have the inspectors that the construction companies already have so it's all just added level of complexity that just doesn't need to be there and hasn't been there for decades. Right? We've been able to build for decades without these requirements. So all of a sudden these requirements are being added on. It's going to add costs. Significant

costs, hundreds of thousands to millions, right? And that's costs that am I going to get to go back now and ask for more money? That's going to be an interesting conversation. So, we need to work on that. We need to make certain, like everybody said, make sure that all the districts understand the same guidelines, and we don't have multiples. You've heard that already, so I don't need to reiterate that. And more timely guidance. More timely guidance from Caltrans. We ask a question we get some verbal. But we can't act on it until we see it in writing and they're real slow to get things in writing to us, because I think that memorializes the statement and then we can hold them accountable to that. So, we'd like to get a little bit more timely guidance and more written guidance in this and allow us to move forward. So, those are the challenges. July is a drop-dead date for us. Again. I do want to say that things have improved significantly in the last month. Matter of fact, I got like, 42 requests for meetings today in my inbox from Caltrans. They're doing individual meetings with us so that has improved. I'm excited about that. I think we're going to have some headway. Just too bad it didn't happen 18 months ago, 24 months ago, when we first had these conversations. Next slide, real quick. This next slide is just reiterating what I just said, the RE stuff this residential engineering requirement is an overstatement of what needs to happen. Again, it's not something that we've ever done in the past and all of a sudden now it's being piled onto this, and it's also being piled onto my internal work, which is going to add to significant costs. And to Chair Bailey Crimmins' initial conversation around broadband for all is the goal. Right? We're getting there. We're 85% there, right? I want to finish the mission up here. And I need some partnership to make that happen. It's not getting any cheaper especially as I go out further and further, so it's going to be more expensive. And for Caltrans to say it's going to be \$150,000 a mile before I put a shovel in the ground I think is exorbitant. So I'd like to have some more conversations, and again, like I said, in the last two weeks those conversations have been more positive, and they have been in the vein of potential partnership. So, we'll wait to see how that all plays out and I'd love to follow up with you guys all later after we've had some time to do this. So I think that's pretty much everything. I don't want to go into the next slide is more non-recoverable project delays. That's just all the stuff I was talking about with regard to, I think, everybody else has kind of talked about this. We've had challenges getting started. I don't need to beat that one up. Just saying, the guy said there's a tsunami coming, you know? And if we can get to that tsunami sooner than later and address it. I think we're going to have some success. If not, I think you're going to be facing some extensions, and some need and especially in areas like ours, we really do don't we don't have 18 months. if the weather comes, and Mother Nature rears her head, we may have 10 months. We may have 12 months. And without a permit. Right now it shrinks every day. So, it is a very timely conversation. That's it for me. I

think I've touched everything I need to touch on and then probably more than that. So I just appreciate you guys taking time allowing me to come in and share and I'm sorry I wasn't there in person. I love doing these things in person so apologize for not being there.

The Chair: Mr. Elliott, thank you very much. I really appreciate, the presentation. Love it to open it up to any members to see if they have any questions. I see none at the dais. Any online? I see none online. Thank you so much, Mr. Elliott. Look forward to continuing to make progress on the miles that you have permitted, and hopefully, we'll get permits on very soon. Thank you very much. All right, our last but not least are our LA partners. We have many different types of partners, but this is one of our government-to-government partners. Very excited. We have Mr. Dan Caroselli, who will be presenting on the LA Bureau of City Lighting this has been a big partnership, and we just love to hear about how you're making progress on behalf of your community.

Dan Caroselli: Thank you so much. Yeah, this slide says Clinton Tsurui, Clinton couldn't be here today, thanks. I'm Dan Caroselli, appreciate you including us in this committee today. Thank you, committee members I'm representing the Los Angeles City Bureau of Street Lighting. We have the smallest joint build project before you today, so I'll try to be quick. We are constructing in a partnership with the state, as I said a joint build this segment that's highlighted here, the 110 corridor through South Los Angeles. This is all entirely within the City of Los Angeles this was a segment that was originally pushed for and advocated on behalf of by many different elected officials in Los Angeles and Los Angeles County because it passes through one of the highest concentrations of disconnected and under-connected households in the state. So we're very excited about the middle mile network project, what it can bring to the state. And we're especially excited that we are constructing this segment on behalf of the project, so next slide. If you will. So, we're the City of LA Bureau of Street Lighting. We're not quite 130 years old or 10,000 years old, we are 100 years old this year, 2025 is our centennial and we have been digging conduit for that 100 years. And so, there's a question that always comes up about why is the Bureau of Street Lighting in this? We are obviously not a telecom provider, but we are, everybody likes to talk about our lights, and we love our lights but really the core business of our operations is maintaining and digging underground conduit which we've been doing for 100 years and all of the streetlights in Los Angeles are underground, electrical. I should say, all of the Bureau Street Lighting Controlled streetlights are underground conduits. So, pivoting to fiber conduit has been a very, relatively simple operation change. We are also bringing on many different attending operations such as splicing. We are also running our own Wi-Fi pilots and things

like that. So we're building up our capabilities to do this kind of work. We have 200,000 streetlight poles. Which have been the predominant co-location location for 5G rollout throughout Los Angeles, so we have had a close connection with telecommunications for the past couple decades. But again, as I said, we also have that 9,000 miles of underground electrical conduit. So we aren't, just to be clear with this project, we are not repurposing electrical conduit, that electrical conduit throughout the city is about 2 inches. We are putting in brand new 4-inch HDBE which is high-density polyurethane conduit in the ground within the bureaus, the Department of Public Works' right-of-way, reserved right-of-way in the sidewalk next slide. So yeah, just 100 years, but 2 years in the fiber optics underground conduit business. On the left, you see our conduit operations 100 years ago, I think that's even a little further than 100 years ago one of the agencies that became this Bureau of Street Lighting. And now on the right is our current longitudinal boring machines that we use for this work. Next slide. So, 13.3 miles again a small part of the overall network but we think it's really transformational project for South Los Angeles, again all of it is within the City of LA's Public Works dedicated right-of-way. We recently started groundbreaking, but we've been working on other projects at the same time, so we've only completed to date less than half a mile, but we are really kicking into gear very soon here. And what we've been doing since March is a lot of potholing and utility location. So when we talk about permitted, the best thing about our bureau is that we're operating within, we get to go out and do this work as long as there's nothing in the way, as long as we have the designs, and we have the manpower, so we do have some key permits that are needed with other local agency. So, this is for crossings and underpasses and things like that going under transportation routes and stuff like that and those are in process. Next slide. So, I don't need to, sorry that's my dog. We don't need to get into the details here, but I have the segments here and their dates you can keep passing through this. Next slide. I don't want to take all the time going through all these, but essentially, we will be meeting the deadline of December 2026 with this project you can skip to the next slide. You can see where this is passing through. Again very close to the 110 freeway in Los Angeles, but entirely on LA City right-of-way. So this has us completing in June 2026 so the groundbreaking in June 2026, so that we can complete the project by December 2026. We may end up going faster than that, but this is what we are setting ourselves up for to make sure that we're proceeding. Obviously these are in urban neighborhoods, very densely populated, very built out we want to make sure that we're very sensitive to the communities that we're working in. Next slide. So again what has made BSL successful? We have our existing right-of-way minimal need to block street or control traffic. We do have to go onto the street when we're going across at intersections but again because we're longitudinal boring we're not doing any cut and cover it's just going under the

ground so it's minimal impact. A century of experience as I said we have a permanent workforce that we're training in fiber optics maintenance and operations as well, but they've had the experience in conduit. And then yeah local storage of equipment and materials we have everything at our yards throughout the city. Next slide. So nothing much that we need except for continued support from other local agencies. Again that's mostly city and county. We may need some state coordination when we cross the 105 but we don't think so. We're going to be going underneath and only crossing over a LA City bridge that we plan to attach to. So that's I think all I have to say about our project. I can go to the next slide I think there's some pictures. Of us just our current construction there it is in downtown LA. A lot of our work to date has been in very, very, very dense impacted areas with we're finding a lot of fun stuff under the ground as we're doing this project. Nothing sensitive I should say but things that people have buried in recent decades that come up as issues. So yeah I'll open it up to questions and again I thank you so much for including us in this as part of the team here it's really quite an honor to be a part of this really varied and diverse group that preceded me, and I thank you as well for understanding that we couldn't make it up to Sacramento.

The Chair: Well thank you Mr. Caroselli and I do remember being in your conference room and talking about this wonderful project and it is great to see timelines and things happening for LA. So I will open it up to any of the committee members to see if they have any questions. I don't see anything on the dais. Anything online? I don't see any. Well thank you very much for staying late with us and I look forward to continue partnership. Appreciate it. All right our last agenda item before public comment is our stakeholder engagement. So we have Monica Hernandez who's going to be giving a quick update.

Monica Hernandez: Thank you. Recognizing the time and unsure of how many callers we might have for public comment if I could have the next slide please. I will just leave this here in front of you and hope to be back at our next regular MMAC meeting with more groundbreaking events listed than I have today. I'm very excited looking ahead for this summer and of course we will communicate to all of our MMAC members these dates and encourage you and invite you to join us. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you. Ms. Hernandez any questions about groundbreaking? I see no members that have questions. Thank you very much for all your hard work. All right we will go ahead and move on to public comment. Ms. Alvarado if you please provide public comment. Guidelines and begin the public comment process.

Alicia Alvarado: Thank you. In order to ensure everyone who wishes to make public comment has the opportunity to do so we respectfully request one person per entity and two minutes per person. The order of public comment will be online public comment submissions prior to the meeting. Zoom hands raised. And phone hands raised via star 9. We have not received any emailed comment submissions prior to our meeting so we will start with public comments in the room and then via Zoom. Seeing no one coming up to our podium. We will turn to public comments on Zoom. First public comment is from Ben Hulet. Please go ahead.

Ben Hulet: Yeah what is going to be the outcome of this meeting? Is there going to be some sort of revised plan or mandate or suggested streamlining process sent to Caltrans. And when do you think that will happen? Will that happen? What's going to be the outcome of this?

Alicia Alvarado: Thank you for the comment. Next public comment is from Mike Ghilotti.

Mike Ghilotti: Hi good afternoon. Thank you for the hearing. I wish I had known about this hearing previously. I would have spoken earlier to the points I'm going to bring up. I represent Ghilotti Brothers we're a 111-year-old company that has 300 union workers in Northern California and we partnered for Caltrans projects for over 50 years. What has happened with this broadband internet initiative so far as a disgrace. I don't know if you know but CDT is canceled several billion dollars of contracts with local contractors. GBI was a low bidder on a \$436 million contract in January of '23. It was to build out the program in 3 years it was a big lift for us on our joint venture partner St. Francis Electric basically \$145 million a year. We added personnel we invested in equipment. We spend thousands of hours helping with design and we stopped bidding work, so we had enough capacity. Every couple months I was begging Mark Malone and CDT to get us work get us jobs. Two years later and not one work order issued CDT used a loophole to back out of their contract. This is the very definition of bid shopping and is illegal. Worse, I'm hearing today that CDT was entering into agreements with RFI2 or squared with contractors for the same work we were still already under contract with. And all this discussion about Caltrans and the issues with permits all I can tell you as a contractor is you can't get permits for work if you don't know who is doing the work and what you're building. This CDT wasted 2 years with zero fiber installed. While they played this bait-and-switch game. I'll tell you I've found CDT to be completely disorganized. Completely lacking transparency and not acting in good faith. Now your program is two and a half years behind. You now have out-of-state communication companies installing Instead of local contractors with local

employees. And they're probably not union partners like they should be. They don't have experience in Caltrans highway right-of-way and they're jeopardizing the safety most likely of the traveling public. And if you think there's any way this program will be delivered by 2026 based on my experience I think you're sadly mistaken. But more importantly how is CDT and all of you as public officials going to be fair and reasonable for canceling our \$436 million contract because you CDT later found a cheaper way to build the work. Thank you.

Alicia Alvarado: There are no further public comments.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Alvarado, and thank you everyone. Are there any other members that want to make any comments before we close? All right, yes Mr. Keever.

Mike Keever: Yeah, Mike Keever Acting Director at Caltrans so I just want to thank everybody that engaged in the process here. I think it's important that we had the opportunity to exchange information I will tell you there is a commitment from Caltrans, and I think there's a commitment from what I heard everybody in the room wants to get this broadband network done and completed and I will express from Caltrans' standpoint we share that, and we have that same commitment with all of you. There are a number of things that from your experience some of those we experienced as well and so I want to just maybe stipulate sometimes the environmental challenges that we all face. That said we're certainly going to take a look at the comments on how do we take appropriate risks I certainly like the comment of can we look at yes unless there has to be a no? I think that posture is something that we certainly want to reflect how do we get this delivered with the time that we have available? And yet at the same time we certainly heard some of those comments today we need to be good stewards of the environment. We need to consider the cultural resource impacts. And any endangered species impacts. But how couldn't we be smart in how we make the decisions and focus our efforts there? And so certainly we'll continue. I do believe we're on a path that there will be to Secretary Maduro's earlier comment. Will we see something changing going forward? The process will lead us I believe in the near future to seeing more and more successes as these permits are issued. And so I certainly hope that my comments bear out correctly going forward. But thank you again for engaging with us.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Keever. Any other comments? I want to thank everyone that participated this afternoon. Very important. I know we don't typically have Ad Hoc MMAC meetings, but it was very important to hear from

our partners and hear exactly what is happening on the ground. And we believe that through increased collaboration and transparency that is how we're going to deliver broadband for all. It has been a pleasure and our next meeting for the MMAC will be July 18th from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. With that I will call the May 28th, 2025, Ad Hoc MMAC meeting adjourned. Thank you.