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

STAFF REPORT

To:	ESCOG Joint Powers Authority
From:	Scott Armstrong, Regional Broadband Coordinator
Subject:	Request Approval to Request IMBC Budget Modification
Meeting date:	October 22, 2025
Prepared on:	October 14, 2025
Attachments:	

- IMBC Budget Modification Request to CPUC
- Appendix A - Budget Spreadsheet
- CPUC Decision T-17778

Background / History:

The Eastern Sierra Council of Governments was awarded a California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) Rural and Urban Regional Broadband Consortia (RBC) grant for $600,000 ($200,000 per year for 3 years, effective through January 31, 2026) for the Inyo-Mono Broadband Consortium (IMBC). The grant application included a proposed work plan and budget, developed around estimates of the amount of work needed to achieve the desired project results for the 5 objectives and 15 activities. As we are approaching the end of the third grant year, the amount of work needed for some of the activities in the work plan is different than what we had originally estimated.

Analysis / Discussion:

In order to appropriately account for the work for each of the activities during this grant year, I would like to submit a budget modification request to the Communications Division Director of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). A budget modification is considered a substantive change to the grant and requires Commission or Communications Director approval. This request for budget modifications does not change the total approved grant budget or the current grant-year budget, and it does not affect the timeline for the three-year consortium grant. The budget modifications in this request will also not adversely impact the completion of the project deliverables identified in our work plan. A summary of the budget modifications is included below:

- Objective 1, Activity 2 – Priority Refinement

    - Reallocate $5,000 from travel, lodging, and per diem to personnel/staff compensation.
    - Travel reimbursements no longer needed for Grant Year 3.
- Objective 2, Activity 1 – Provider Coordination
    - Reduce budget by $3,000 due to winding down of current grant program application periods.
- Objective 2, Activity 2 – Digital 395 Coordination
    - Reduce budget by $4,000 as coordination needs decreased with Digital 395's integration into the State's Middle-Mile Network.
- Objective 3, Activity 2 – Project Grant Applications
    - Reduce budget by $2,000 due to completion of major grant submissions and reduced support needs.
- Objective 4, Activity 3 – Agency Broadband Strategy
    - Increase budget by $9,000 to complete Mono County's Broadband Strategic Plan and initiate an Inyo County plan.
- Objective 5 – Data Collection Activities
    - Reallocate $3,500 from Activity 2 to Activity 1.
        - Activity 1: *Encourage Local Speed Tests* – increase by $3,500 for continued operation and improvement of regional speed test tool.
        - Activity 2: *Encourage State/Federal Speed Tests* – decrease by $3,500 due to limited data availability from state and FCC systems.

Additionally, as part of the process to approve a similar CASF RBC budget modification request in 2024, the CPUC requested that a consent for be signed to verify that the ESCOG and IMBC would adhere to the terms, conditions and requirements of the grant award as described in CPUC Resolution T-17778. Though not expected, it is possible that the CPUC may require a signature verifying that the ESCOG and IMBC will adhere to the terms, conditions and requirements of the grant award.

BUDGET IMPACTS:
None.

LEGAL REVIEW:
ESCOG Counsel John-Carl Vallejo has reviewed this item and found that it complies with the law.

RECOMMENDATION:
Staff recommends the ESCOG Board authorize the Regional Broadband Coordinator to submit a request to the CPUC to modify the IMBC Grant Year 3 Budget, and to authorize the ESCOG Executive Director to sign any associated documents to support the budget modification request.