

communications facilities next to scenic highways are to be built underground, so they are not visible from the highways. Charter's planned construction along Highways 1 and 68 is necessary to bring the promised upgrades to 900 households in Carmel Highlands and Laguna Seca. Charter represents that, because it will be adding to existing poles and aerial lines, visual impacts will be minimal.

The anticipated benefits to Monterey County residents from Charter's completed upgrade are substantial. They include significant enhancements in internet quality and speed, video on demand, digital video and high definition cable television services to areas in the County which previously had no services or substandard services; they will be offered at reasonable prices, including lower rates for low income families. Residents in the upgraded areas will be able to use the internet for job hunting, educational training, launching a new business, accessing health care, and innumerable important uses, in addition to personal communications and entertainment. The upgrades will enhance economic development in the County as well. High speed, modern cable services will support local workforce development and job creation. When the upgrade is complete, it will enhance the County's ability to attract high-tech and research companies to locate in the County and to further its goal of becoming a hub for agricultural technology. With the upgrades, the County will be able to attract employers that cannot operate competitively without high-speed internet.

The Information Technology Department (ITD) has drafted a letter supporting Charter's request for a Section 320 exemption for the Board's consideration. ITD recommends that the Board authorize the Director of ITD to send the letter to the CPUC. Doing so will further Charter's fulfillment of the settlement promises it made to the County and will enable the County to receive the benefits of the services upgrade.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

County Counsel has reviewed the draft letter to the CPUC.

FINANCING:

There is no financial effect on the County from sending a letter supporting Charter's Section 320 exemption request to the CPUC.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

Enhanced economic development, in terms of attracting tech jobs and companies, is served because high speed internet services are essential to attracting employers in these industries. A buildout of modern internet and cable television services to rural areas of Monterey County strengthens and expands the County infrastructure.

X Economic Development

Administration

Health & Human Services

X Infrastructure

Public Safety

Prepared by: Eric A. Chatham, Director, Information Technology Department, 759-6920

Approved by:

Date: _____

Dewayne Woods, Assistant County Administrative Officer

Attachments: Draft letter from Eric Chatham, Director, Monterey County Information Technology Department,

to the California Public Utility Commission re: Charter's request for a Section 320 exemption

Attachments are on file with the Clerk of the Board