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Noel Gallo  
Councilmember - District 5

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September 3, 2021

California Public Utilities Commission  
Public Advisor's Office  
505 Van Ness Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102

**RE: SB 156 Fiber Map**

Dear CPUC Commissioners,

I write to you today to urge you to reconsider SB156 proposed Middle Mile fiber map's route in Oakland.

Oakland's Fruitvale district has always been my home. I've represented the district for many years, serving on the School Board for 20 years and now serving the community for a third term on Oakland's City Council.

Capital infrastructure investments of this magnitude are the exception, not the rule, which is why it is critical for CPUC commissioners to listen to the communities most impacted by their decisions.

The current map from the Commission circumvents the Fruitvale district, an area that your own maps show has the least access to broadband internet access. For SB 156 is to live up to its mission of bridging the digital divide, the Commission should redirect Oakland's fiber from the hills to the flatlands, specifically along Route 185 - a state highway more commonly referred to as International Boulevard. Middle Mile fiber along this stretch would bisect the regions that would benefit most from open-access, high-capacity broadband internet connection.

For the last year, the City has demonstrated that it possesses the technical skill and political will to implement municipal fiber solutions. The OakWifi public Wifi pilot in the Fruitvale district is an innovative program employing mesh wireless technology to extend connection through many public spaces in Oakland's flatlands. Our only limiting factor has been the amount of reliable, high-capacity municipal dark fiber. Relying on Commercial Internet Service Providers is not a viable solution as they have underinvested in East Oakland's communities for decades. Private ISPs rarely lease their dark fiber

and when they do it is only offered at premium rates that make subsidizing costs to end users impossible for the City government.

SB 156's historic \$3.25 billion-dollar investment could transform the digital landscape of the Fruitvale district and help provide critical services to our constituents. Students would no longer have to rely on 5mbps hotspots. Families could access social benefits, telework options and telehealth services. Small businesses could connect to new suppliers and customers to expand their market potential. City government could build "last mile" fiber to critical infrastructure and the State could spur private investment in 5G and FTTP last mile connectivity.

As a state highway, Route 185 is uniquely situated at the epicenter of our vibrant community. Switches and manholes at major intersections could provide the backbone for a more connected Oakland. I look forward to continued partnership with the CPUC as we build back better.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Noel Gallo", written over a horizontal line.

Noel Gallo – Councilmember, District 5  
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