MEDIA STATEMENT

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Statement by California Emerging Technology Fund President and CEO

Sunne Wright McPeak on Comcast Internet Essentials Announcement

We welcome the announcement by Comcast this morning that it will extend Internet Essentials, its $9.95-a-month broadband program for low-income families with students. We also recognize the company's contributions to local California non-profits in Fresno and Elk Grove to promote digital literacy training. However, these actions barely scratch the surface when measuring the need in California, where 25% of households do not have high-speed Internet at home.

In nearly three years, Comcast, by its own count, has signed up only 11% of California households eligible for Internet Essentials. Furthermore, Comcast investments in community partners have been far too low to drive significant adoption and the company has moved slowly to remove barriers to allow easy signups as promised.

Four months ago, David Cohen, Comcast Executive Vice President, testified before U.S. Senators that broadband adoption "is not at an acceptable pace, and certain populations are still at a danger of being left behind." Today's announcement will not accelerate the pace in a meaningful way. If government regulators allow cable Internet services to be consolidated without holding providers directly accountable for providing a measurable public benefit, the most disadvantaged—low-income households, Latino families, rural residents, persons with disabilities—will remain on the wrong side of Digital Divide for years to come.

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