



MARIE ALVARADO-GIL **STATE SENATOR DISTRICT 4**



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Senator Alvarado-Gil's SB 754 passes 15 to 0 and will help Rural Counties

Senator Marie Alvarado-Gil started her legislative year off with a big win for Rural Counties. SB-754 handedly passed through the Senate Energy, Utilities, and Communications Committee by a vote of 15 to 0. The bill restores a prior rate-making and rate design methodology by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to ensure that funding for small rural telephone companies continues to cover their cost of service and infrastructure.

Providing communication services to rural communities is extremely challenging. Installing networks through rugged terrain, mountain and forests to reach sparse populations is much more costly than what customers can afford to pay, and significantly higher than what it costs in the cities. However, all communities in California need affordable and reliable telephone and broadband service to keep businesses, schools, hospitals, and other essential institutions connected to valuable resources. This service is not a luxury, but a necessity.

Broadband internet access is a critical service that is still desperately needed and often unavailable in these rural areas.

"As a resident of a small mountain community myself, I can personally attest to the necessity of SB-754," stated Alvarado-Gil. "I am grateful to the Senate Energy, Utilities and Communications Committee for recognizing the importance of this bill and helping to ensure that all residents of California receive equal access to these essential services which allow for democratic engagement, social mobility, and economic equality and growth."

Rose Cullen, Chair of the California Communications Association added, "We deeply appreciate Senator Alvarado-Gil being a fierce champion of closing the digital divide for rural communities across the state. As builders of the telecommunications networks in rural areas, we know firsthand the critical need for upgrading these networks so our customers can enjoy the benefits of high-speed internet access, like telehealth, tele-agriculture, distance learning, e-commerce, and emergency notifications. The Senator's SB 754 is an important component of the state's overall efforts to bring digital equity to all Californians."

To learn more about Senator Alvarado-Gil please go to: <https://sd04.senate.ca.gov/>.

Senator Alvarado-Gil represents the 4th Senate District including the Counties of Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Inyo, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Mono, Nevada, Placer, Stanislaus, and Tuolumne.

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