



ACTION ALERT

AB 2395 Held in Assembly Appropriations Committee

Today, Assembly Bill 2395, authored by Assembly Member Evan Low (D-Silicon Valley), was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. Assembly Member Low introduced AB 2395 earlier this year in an attempt to establish a framework for legacy phone carriers to relinquish their decades-old obligations that guarantee basic two-way telephone service over traditional copper-based phone lines. While on the surface AB 2395 offers consumers the promise of an alternative telecom service, often available through wireless, Voice over the Internet Protocol (VoIP) or Internet Protocol, these services primarily rely on fiber or broadband-based networks that are often non-existent and too costly to deploy in rural communities.

RCRC has strongly supported the deployment and expansion of broadband and other modern telecommunication networks in rural and remote areas of the state. The expansion of these services is not only a priority for our member counties, but a necessary move to bridge the digital divide for businesses and residents alike and to foster economic growth. Unfortunately, the services envisioned in AB 2395 are either non-existent, unreliable, or cost-prohibitive in many of our member counties. Subsequently, traditional landline phone service remains the backbone and only reliable two-way communication mode.

RCRC recognizes that many businesses and consumers across the state are opting for other modes of communication as they become available in their communities. However, any transition to these services must be done in a very judicious manner and contain fail-

safe mechanisms to ensure that 1) basic communications tools remain unequivocally viable, reliable, and affordable; and 2) there is an opportunity to ensure more advanced telecommunications infrastructure can replace these services as they too become outdated.

RCRC deployed a comprehensive advocacy campaign against AB 2395 earlier this year, leading opposition efforts with our member counties, and securing placement of opposition articles in local media outlets throughout the state. Because of these efforts, RCRC proved successful at defeating the measure, although the bill could be resurrected through a procedural motion or be reintroduced in the next legislative session. RCRC's overall advocacy efforts, as well as member county opposition letters, can be accessed on the AB 2395 webpage, [here](#).

RCRC will continue to work with the bill author's office to provide guidance on how a transition to these services could be implemented, and will continue to advocate for critical consumer protections that must be in place before a transition is authorized to occur.



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