

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is Californians for a Connected Future?

[Californians for a Connected Future](#) (CCF) is a broad, diverse coalition of more than 100 Tribal leaders, social justice advocates, Veterans, ethnic business and community organizations supporting Assembly Bill 470. The bill will modernize state law to incentivize investments in more innovative, reliable, fast and affordable communications **for all**.

## What is Californians for a Connected Future advocating for?

CCF believes that **all Californians deserve reliable, fast and affordable communications options** – no matter who you are, where you live, or why you need to be connected. But outdated state laws result in massive investments in aging copper landline technology that consumers are increasingly abandoning because it does not meet their needs.

Our coalition **supports Assembly Bill 470** which will encourage investments in advanced communications options, while ensuring no Californian or community is left behind. CCF is also committed to a collaborative, transparent process with stakeholders and policymakers. A phased, multi-year transition will ensure a smooth shift to modern networks, giving Californians the time and support they need.

## What does AB 470 do?

AB 470 recognizes the importance of investing in modern communications in California by updating some existing telecommunications regulations. Current regulations discourage investment in modern networks like fiber and wireless. Updating these regulations helps ensure critical communications infrastructure investment supports those services that Californians use today and into the future.

AB 470 reforms those policies while protecting those customers who rely on old copper-based landline services. AB 470 is a balanced solution that incentivizes investment while ensuring no Californians are left behind.

## How many Californians still have a copper landline?

**Only 5% of households** within the service area of the state's largest landline provider **still subscribe to copper-based home phone service** – a number that continues to decline. Consumers are overwhelmingly choosing to use wireless or internet-based communications services because they are more reliable and versatile.

AB 470 will accelerate investments in newer, more reliable technologies – instead of maintaining an outdated copper network. The bill ensures this transition is conducted gradually, over time, and that no community is left without reliable and affordable home phone service.

## If AB 470 passes, will customers lose access to copper landlines immediately?

**Absolutely not.** Current services will be maintained until new technologies are available that are equally or more reliable and affordable. Some geographic areas will transition faster while other communities will take longer based on unique characteristics. AB 470 ensures that every Californian maintains access to essential voice services. The transition to a modern network will occur over years, not months. AB 470 ensures a phased-in, multi-year process that protects all Californians.

- Modernization is only permitted in areas that are:
  - Unpopulated and without customers, or
  - Designated as “well-served,” meaning:
    - At least three alternative voice services are available,
    - At least one alternative must be a wireline provider,
    - All alternatives must be facilities-based (not resellers) and serve 99.9% of the census block.
- In areas that do not meet the “well-served” threshold, existing COLR obligations remain fully intact. **Nothing changes in these areas.**

### What if the “alternative” provider leaves the market?

In the unlikely event a provider exits the market, leaving no alternatives in that area, AB 470 outlines a fallback COLR requirement for the company that is granted a status change in that service area, requiring them to maintain service continuity and protect affected customers.

### Does AB 470 include any consumer protections?

**AB 470 contains robust consumer protections**, including an opportunity to challenge data before a company submits for amended status to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). Under AB 470, customers can also challenge the availability of alternative voice services. All challenges are to be reviewed by an independent third-party selected by the CPUC and paid for by the telecommunications provider seeking to amend their COLR obligation.

Additionally, the bill requires a public notice to be published in the amended status area, and customers must receive advance notice of any changes, with materials provided in-language. AB 470 also requires that local public workshops, a dedicated website, and a toll-free number be available to help customers understand the process and their options.

### Aren't copper landlines safer during emergencies?

First responders rely on the internet and mobile networks to send real-time messages, videos, and location data, improving decision-making and cutting response times. Moreover, when evacuation orders are issued, mobile devices keep residents connected to emergency personnel and life-saving updates. Meanwhile, copper landlines become useless once people leave their homes.

**AB 470 ensures no impact to Land Mobile Radio (LMR) systems used by first responders.** The bill will also provide transition assistance funding for public safety agencies – to be paid by the provider seeking amended status – as they migrate to modern network infrastructure, including funding for Tribal governments, community-based organizations, and local governments to be used on outreach and awareness. **AB 470 also ensures that a replacement voice service must be offered that is compatible** with home alarm systems, medical alert devices, and point-of-sale terminals.

### How much does it cost to maintain the existing copper landline network?

Maintaining the state's outdated copper network results in stranded resources that are better prioritized for investments in modern communications technologies. Customers overwhelmingly prefer innovative fiber, wireless and satellite technologies for their reliability and affordability. **AB 470 will prepare California for the future.**

## Aren't newer products and services more expensive and less affordable?

**No.** According to the state's largest copper landline provider, traditional copper home phone service costs an average of more than \$80 per month, despite being outdated and less reliable. In contrast, modern internet and wireless phone services range from \$30 to \$45 per month, offering **greater affordability and additional features** like texting, video calls, and high-speed internet access.

AB 470 requires that customers **have access to at least one alternative voice service that is comparable in price to traditional Plain Old Telephone Service (POTS)**. The bill provides additional protections by establishing a challenge process that requires a company to continue providing basic exchange service to a customer if there is not a comparatively priced alternative voice service available to the customer. AB 470 also requires that **companies must offer an affordable broadband plan to eligible customers** in each amended status area.

## Many older adults use traditional landlines. How will this impact them?

Current services will be maintained until new technologies are available that are equally or more reliable and affordable. AB 470 will modernize state law to incentivize investments in more reliable technologies. **This years-long transition will mean improved connections for our older adult community** since accessing and being able to navigate the internet is no longer a luxury; it's a necessity. Moving on from outdated copper services doesn't just create meaningful improvements in the everyday lives of older Californians; it makes it possible to access critical services that otherwise wouldn't be available through copper-based landlines, like telehealth, meal delivery, and much more.

## What about rural communities without reliable wireless or fiber and cable technology?

**No Californian will be left without reliable phone service in their homes – including the ability to access 9-1-1.**

Current copper legacy voice services will be maintained until new technologies are available that are proven to be equally or more reliable and affordable. By modernizing state law, we can incentivize investments in high-speed internet and wireless services in rural and other communities and help close the digital divide.

Furthermore, under AB 470, for rural areas and communities that do not meet the "well-served" threshold, existing COLR policies remain fully intact. Nothing changes in these areas.

## Copper technology has been used for a long time. That makes it pretty durable, right?

**No.** The existing copper network technology is 150-years-old, and many manufacturers no longer provide parts to maintain the system and repair it when it breaks. Copper is also vulnerable to moisture, corrosion and temperature fluctuations, which can lead to frequent service disruptions.

The copper landline network is also a **major target for theft**, wreaking havoc in neighborhoods and causing extended outages that take longer to repair. In Vallejo, for example, recent copper theft activity led to schools being shut down and customers being without service for 4 days. As California modernizes its telecommunications laws, transitioning from aging copper to more modern technologies will ensure stronger, more resilient connectivity for all communities.

## What are some of the environmental benefits of transitioning away from copper to fiber and other technologies?

**Old copper networks are energy hogs**, while cable and fiber technologies use up to 70% less power.<sup>1</sup> Once installed, fiber optic networks are more energy-efficient, require less space, and require less maintenance than

copper systems.<sup>2</sup> AB 470 will accelerate investments toward newer technologies, helping **reduce energy waste, cut down on pollution and lower emissions.**

## How will AB 470 “prepare California for the future”?

AB 470 will position the state for long-term connectivity and workforce readiness goals, including:

- A three-year commitment to expand fiber broadband access, requiring companies to install fiber to at least as many homes as they had traditional phone customers when they received amended status.
- Requiring funding to build skills around modern networks and prepare workers for the jobs of the future.
- Requiring funding to develop community-based digital literacy programs and resources.

By transitioning away from the outdated copper network, AB 470 will help bridge California’s digital divide and promote the deployment of high-speed, reliable, and affordable internet services, ensuring a more connected California.

## Will AB 470 help bridge the digital divide?

**Yes.** Right now, too many Californians are being left behind without access to reliable high-speed internet and phone services. **AB 470 will help bridge the digital divide** by encouraging investment in modern, high-speed fiber networks, particularly in underserved and rural communities. Many low-income and remote areas still rely on outdated infrastructure that cannot support the demands of today’s digital world.

1. AT&T Sustainability Statement, June and August 2024.

2. Ramboll Group, February 2025, “Greener Connections: Understanding the Environmental Impacts of Fiber and Copper Communications Networks.”