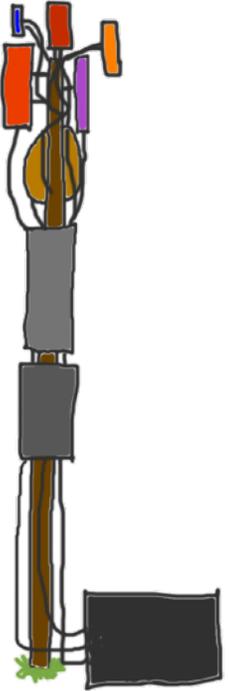


SB-556 and AB-537 can't possibly close the "Digital Divide." Anyone who says otherwise is badly misinformed. Here's why.

The telecom industry wrote SB-556 and AB-537 to fast-track approvals for its powerful new "small cell" antenna installations. The industry is tired of delays caused by local governments trying to protect the safety and well-being of local residents with local zoning laws.

The new antennas are necessary to allow **AT&T, Verizon, T-Mobile** and others to enter the highly profitable video streaming business without having to run a physical cable into peoples' homes or apartments. This has nothing to do with on-line education or improving access to the internet for low income and rural customers. The telecom industry is hoping a new generation of "cord cutters" will **switch** from their current cable subscriptions to new wireless subscriptions.

The sad fact is **it's not worth it for telecoms to install their expensive antennas in underserved communities.** People in these minority or economically challenged areas aren't likely to sign up for expensive monthly subscriptions to Netflix, Hulu, Disney + and other services, which is where the real money for the telecoms lies. It's a lot more expensive to maintain a wireless connection than a wired connection.*

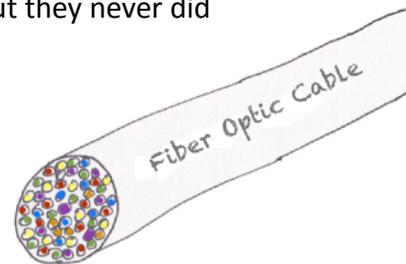


The digital divide is an economic problem that neither SB-556 nor AB-537 will solve.



The telecoms are promising that the passage of SB-556 and AB-537 will close the digital divide, but here's the true story: they've been promising to stop "**digital redlining**" and connect minority and rural communities since at least the 1990s when they began to replace old copper lines with fiber-optic cable. But they never did connect those folks. And these bills contain **nothing** to make them do it now.

The way to close the digital divide is with a superior technology that is faster, more reliable, more affordable, less prone to hacking and is 100% safe for everyone. A lot of the infrastructure is already in place. It's **fiber-optic to and through the premises**, or "**FTTP**."



SB-556 and AB-537 can't possibly close the digital divide, and anyone who says otherwise is either badly misinformed or deliberately misstating the facts.

* NPR's Marketplace, March 1, 2021

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