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## **Assemblymember Rodriguez Introduces Legislation to Fund Broadband Capability for Fairgrounds Across the State**

**(Sacramento, CA)** – Today, Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez (D – Pomona) introduced AB 415, which would provide funding for fairgrounds to establish broadband to host emergency response operations. Fairgrounds are essential sites up and down the State when California faces a catastrophe. Despite how often fairgrounds serve as a site for emergency response operations, many lack high-speed internet capabilities.

“As Chair of the Emergency Management Committee, I find it crucial that our fairgrounds are equipped with the necessary broadband capabilities to host emergency response operations. Often, these sites house large numbers of people during a disaster, and victims and first responders rely on the internet to communicate and receive up-to-date information,” **stated Assemblymember Rodriguez.**

Over the past decade, 71 of the 74 fairgrounds in the State were activated in response to an emergency. Many of these fairgrounds were activated more than once in a calendar year. These fairgrounds were used to host emergency personnel responding to fires, to house evacuees, and even served as COVID-19 testing and vaccination sites.

Several fairgrounds throughout the State, especially rural fairgrounds, need more broadband infrastructure to host emergency responders and evacuees. A 2020 study by the California State University of Chico compared rural versus urban fairgrounds and found that rural fairgrounds are 15-20% less likely to have connection speeds capable of even a two-person video call.

AB 415 would work to solve this ongoing issue by establishing a grant program administered by the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES). This program would allow state-designated fairgrounds to build and upgrade their broadband communication infrastructure. Cal OES will determine funding awards based on each fairgrounds’ individual need in servicing an emergency response operation.

“California is a disaster-prone state, and we must ensure our preparedness efforts are kept up on all fronts, which includes having broadband at fairgrounds that are often activated in an emergency. I want to thank my colleagues who have signed on to co-author this bill for their support and for seeing the importance of this effort,” **added Assemblymember Rodriguez.**

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*Assemblymember Rodriguez ([Twitter](#)) represents the 53<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District which includes the cities of Chino, Montclair, Ontario, Pomona, and Upland. He is Chair of the Assembly Committee on Emergency Management.*