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July 17, 2020

Director Alaric Degrafinried
San Francisco Public Works
49 South Van Ness Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94103

Re: Support of Microtrenching

Dear Director Degrafinried,

On behalf of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, representing hundreds of local businesses, I offer our support of microtrenching in San Francisco. The global pandemic of COVID-19 has pushed our society to move faster towards technology that can support working from home more feasible - and it needs to be accessible.

Over 100,000 San Franciscans today either lack broadband home Internet or basic digital skills, with those who are low-income, senior, limited English proficient, or have a disability being the most at risk. About 1 in 8 residents still lack high-speed home Internet service, 1 in 7 families in public school lack a computer connected to the Internet at home, and 1 in 7 residents lack basic digital literacy such as the ability to send email or use a search engine.

With digitalization remaking the workforce, schools, health care, city services and even the census, the City has a responsibility for bridging this digital divide and ensuring all residents have the digital tools and skills to be successful. Our businesses are calling for expanding fiber and reliable high-speed internet access; this is a key part of the San Francisco Chamber's Economic Recovery playbook, based on input from over 30 business sectors.

Microtrenching makes a cut into the street that is only two inches wide and up to two feet deep. Once the fiber has been installed at the bottom of the microtrench, it can be filled and sealed in minutes. The entire process can allow streets to reopen the same day, drastically minimizing any street disturbance during construction. Fiber and the connectivity it provides for work, entertainment, healthcare, and access to online essential services is critical now more than ever. Microtrenching makes fiber scalable, quick to install, and will assist in bridging the digital divide.

Given the ability of microtrenching to help bridge the digital divide, we strongly encourage and support microtrenching programs to move forward. Thank you for your time and consideration of such a crucial essential service for our City.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rodney Fong".

Rodney Fong
President and CEO
San Francisco Chamber of Commerce

cc: Rachel Gordon