

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2021

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SENATE BILL 517

Short Title: Innovative Statewide Broadband Infrastructure. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Newton and Chaudhuri (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

April 6, 2021

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY FOR THE PREPARATION OF STATEWIDE BROADBAND MAPS AND TO ESTABLISH THE DEPARTMENT AS THE SOLE SOURCE OF BROADBAND MAPPING FOR STATE AGENCIES; RELIEVE REGULATORY BURDENS TO EXPEDITE BROADBAND EXPANSION; ALLOW FOR USE OF EXISTING EASEMENTS FOR BROADBAND EXPANSION; EXPAND DISTRIBUTION OF STATE SURPLUS COMPUTERS AND COMPUTER HARDWARE FOR NONPROFITS; ALLOW LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEASING OF EXISTING BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE; EXPAND FUNDING FOR G.R.E.A.T. PROGRAM BROADBAND GRANTS; AND PROVIDE STOPGAP INTERNET ACCESS FOR CLASSROOM ACCESS, HEALTH CARE ACCESS, AND JOB CREATION.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

PART I. DIT BROADBAND MAPPING

SECTION 1.1. G.S. 143B-1321 reads as rewritten:

"§ 143B-1321. Powers and duties of the Department; cost-sharing with exempt entities.

(a) The Department shall have the following powers and duties:

...

(34) Prepare and maintain statewide broadband maps to identify the capabilities and needs related to broadband access and serve as the sole provider of broadband mapping for State agencies.

...."

SECTION 1.2. G.S. 143B-1370 reads as rewritten:

"§ 143B-1370. Communications services.

(a) The State CIO shall exercise authority for telecommunications and other communications included in information technology relating to the internal management and operations of State agencies. In discharging that responsibility, the State CIO shall do the following:

...

(5) Provide for the establishment, management, and operation, through either State ownership, by contract, or through commercial leasing, of the following systems and services as they affect the internal management and operation of State agencies:

a. Central telephone systems and telephone networks, including Voice over Internet Protocol and Commercial Mobile Radio Systems.



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- b. Satellite services.
- c. Closed-circuit TV systems.
- d. Two-way radio systems.
- e. Microwave systems.
- f. Related systems based on telecommunication technologies.
- g. The "State Network," managed by the Department, which means any connectivity designed for the purpose of providing Internet Protocol transport of information for State agencies.
- h. ~~Broadband.~~ Broadband, including serving as the sole source of agency broadband maps.

...."

SECTION 1.3. G.S. 143B-1373 reads as rewritten:

"§ 143B-1373. Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) program.

...

(m) The Office of Broadband Infrastructure in the Department of Information Technology (Office) shall be the designated agency for receipt and disbursement of federal grant funds intended for the State for broadband expansion and shall seek available federal grant funds for that purpose. All federal grant funds received for the purpose of broadband expansion shall be disbursed in accordance with this section. The Office shall serve as the designated agency for the receipt of all State, federal, and private grants, gifts, or matching funds for broadband mapping, as provided by G.S. 143B-1370(a)(5)h. Funds received under this subsection shall remain unexpended until appropriated by an act of the General Assembly.

...."

SECTION 1.4. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Information Technology the sum of one million dollars (\$1,000,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2020-2021 fiscal year to be used for broadband mapping in accordance with G.S. 143B-1370(a)(5)h.

PART II. RELIEVE REGULATORY BURDENS TO EXPEDITE BROADBAND EXPANSION

SECTION 2.1.(a) The Institute for Emerging Issues at North Carolina State University (IEI) shall host a structured stakeholder process to ascertain ways to relieve regulatory burdens with the goal of expediting broadband expansion in the State.

SECTION 2.1.(b) There is appropriated from the General Fund to North Carolina State University the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) for the 2020-2021 fiscal year to be allocated to the Institute for Emerging Issues to host the structured stakeholder process outlined in this section.

PART III. ALLOW USE OF EXISTING EASEMENTS FOR BROADBAND EXPANSION

PART IV. EXPAND DISTRIBUTION OF STATE SURPLUS COMPUTERS AND COMPUTER HARDWARE TO NONPROFITS

PART V. LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEASING OF EXISTING BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

PART VI. EXPAND FUNDING FOR G.R.E.A.T. PROGRAM BROADBAND GRANTS

PART VII. STOPGAP INTERNET ACCESS FOR CLASSROOM ACCESS, HEALTH ACCESS, AND JOB CREATION.

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PART VIII. EFFECTIVE DATE

SECTION 8.1. Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes law.