

By the Committee on Communications, Energy, and Public Utilities; and Senator King

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to broadband Internet service;
3 providing legislative findings and intent; authorizing
4 the Department of Management Services to engage in
5 certain activities related to assessing the need for
6 broadband Internet service in the state, planning for
7 such service, and encouraging the statewide deployment
8 of such service; authorizing the department to apply
9 for and accept certain funds; authorizing the
10 department to enter into contracts; authorizing the
11 department to establish committees or workgroups;
12 authorizing the department to adopt rules; providing
13 an effective date.

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15 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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17 Section 1. (1) The Legislature finds that broadband
18 Internet service is critical to the economic development of the
19 state and is beneficial for libraries, schools, colleges and
20 universities, health care providers, and community
21 organizations. The Legislature further finds that barriers exist
22 to the statewide deployment of broadband Internet service,
23 especially in rural, unserved, or underserved communities. The
24 Legislature therefore intends to promote the efficient and
25 effective deployment of broadband Internet service throughout
26 the state through a coordinated statewide effort.

27 (2) The Department of Management Services is authorized to
28 work collaboratively with, and to receive staffing support and
29 other resources from, Enterprise Florida, Inc., state agencies,

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30 local governments, private businesses, and community
31 organizations to:

32 (a) Conduct a needs assessment of broadband Internet
33 service in collaboration with communications service providers,
34 including, but not limited to, wireless and wireline Internet
35 service providers, to develop geographical information system
36 maps at the census tract level that will:

37 1. Identify geographic gaps in broadband services,
38 including areas unserved by any broadband provider and areas
39 served by a single broadband provider;

40 2. Identify the download and upload transmission speeds
41 made available to businesses and individuals in the state, at
42 the census tract level of detail, using data rate benchmarks for
43 broadband service used by the Federal Communications Commission
44 to reflect different speed tiers; and

45 3. Provide a baseline assessment of statewide broadband
46 deployment in terms of percentage of households with broadband
47 availability.

48 (b) Create a strategic plan that has goals and strategies
49 for increasing the use of broadband Internet service in the
50 state.

51 (c) Build and facilitate local technology planning teams or
52 partnerships with members representing cross-sections of the
53 community, which may include, but are not limited to,
54 representatives from the following organizations and industries:
55 libraries, K-12 education, colleges and universities, local
56 health care providers, private businesses, community
57 organizations, economic development organizations, local
58 governments, tourism, parks and recreation, and agriculture.

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59 (d) Encourage the use of broadband Internet service,
60 especially in the rural, unserved, and underserved communities
61 of the state through grant programs having effective strategies
62 to facilitate the statewide deployment of broadband Internet
63 service. For any grants to be awarded, priority must be given to
64 projects that:

65 1. Provide access to broadband education, awareness,
66 training, access, equipment, and support to libraries, schools,
67 colleges and universities, health care providers, and community
68 support organizations.

69 2. Encourage investments in primarily unserved areas to
70 give consumers a choice of more than one broadband Internet
71 service provider.

72 3. Work toward establishing affordable and sustainable
73 broadband Internet service in unserved areas of the state.

74 4. Facilitate the development of applications, programs,
75 and services, including, but not limited to, telework,
76 telemedicine, and e-learning to increase the usage of, and
77 demand for, broadband Internet service in the state.

78 (3) The department may apply for and accept federal funds
79 for purposes of this section, as well as gifts and donations
80 from individuals, foundations, and private organizations.

81 (4) The department is authorized to enter into contracts
82 necessary or useful to carry out the purposes of this section.

83 (5) The department is authorized to establish any committee
84 or workgroup to administer and carry out the purposes of this
85 section.

86 (6) The department is authorized to adopt rules necessary
87 to carry out the purposes of this section, including, without

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88 limitation, the authority to establish definitions of terms
89 pertinent to this section.

90 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.