

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

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

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

29 (2) The Department of Management Services is authorized to
 30 work collaboratively with, and to receive staffing support and
 31 other resources from, Enterprise Florida, Inc., state agencies,
 32 local governments, private businesses, and community
 33 organizations to:

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

39 1. Identify geographic gaps in broadband Internet service,
 40 including areas unserved by any broadband service provider and
 41 areas served by a single broadband service provider.

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

47 3. Provide a baseline assessment of statewide broadband
 48 Internet service deployment in terms of the percentage of
 49 households with broadband service availability.

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

53 (c) Build and facilitate local technology planning teams
 54 or partnerships with members representing cross-sections of the
 55 community, which may include, but are not limited to,
 56 representatives from the following organizations and industries:

57 libraries, K-12 education, colleges and universities, local
 58 health care providers, private businesses, community
 59 organizations, economic development organizations, local
 60 governments, tourism, parks and recreation, and agriculture.

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

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

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

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

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

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

83 (4) The department may enter into contracts to carry out
 84 the purposes of this section and is encouraged to contract with

85 nonprofit entities when feasible.

86 (5) The department may establish any committee or
87 workgroup for purposes of administering this section.

88 (6) The department may adopt rules pursuant to ss.
89 120.536(1) and 120.54, Florida Statutes, to administer this
90 section, including, but not limited to, rules that define terms
91 for purposes of this section.

92 (7) The department may adopt emergency rules pursuant to
93 s. 120.54, Florida Statutes. The Legislature finds that such
94 emergency rulemaking authority is necessary for preservation of
95 the rights and welfare of the public in order to provide
96 additional funds for the benefit of this state. The Legislature
97 further finds that the activity authorized in this section
98 requires that the department periodically respond as quickly as
99 practicable to changes in the marketplace and the federal and
100 state regulatory environment. Therefore, in adopting such
101 emergency rules, the department need not make the findings
102 required by s. 120.54(4)(a), Florida Statutes.

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