

ASSEMBLY SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY  
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

**ASSEMBLY, No. 850**

with committee amendments

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: AUGUST 10, 2020

The Assembly Science, Innovation and Technology Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 850.

As amended and reported by the committee, this bill establishes the “Community Broadband Study Commission” (commission).

Under the bill, the commission is to evaluate the feasibility of establishing community broadband networks in this State and is responsible for the following: 1) considering whether leasing or purchasing established broadband infrastructure, such as unused fiber optic cable, is more advantageous in creating a faster network; 2) considering whether establishing a community broadband municipal or county agency or a non-profit corporation is more appropriate to administer the community broadband network; 3) evaluating the different methods, including legislation and contracts with private companies, that other municipalities or counties in this country have used to implement community broadband networks; 4) determining the most cost effective method in which to establish community broadband networks, with a cost estimate for the local government and a rate estimate for paying customers; and 5) exploring all possible federal, State, and private funding sources for the establishment of community broadband networks in the State.

The commission is to report its findings, conclusions, and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature no later than one year following the first meeting of the commission. The commission is to expire upon the submission of the commission’s report.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2020-2021 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to remove one member of the Senate and one member of the General Assembly from the commission’s membership and to add two public members to the

commission, one of whom is to be appointed by the President of the Senate and one of whom is to be appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly. The amendments also create geographic diversity among the public members of the commission.