

SENATE, No. 2864

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED SEPTEMBER 14, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator STEVEN V. OROHO

District 24 (Morris, Sussex and Warren)

Senator TROY SINGLETON

District 7 (Burlington)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes “Community Broadband Study Commission.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT establishing the “Community Broadband Study
2 Commission.

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6

7 1. a. There is established the “Community Broadband Study
8 Commission.” The commission shall consist of 11 members as
9 follows:

10 (1) the President of the Board of Public Utilities, ex officio, or
11 the president’s designee, who shall serve as chairperson of the
12 commission;

13 (2) the Chief Technology Officer of the Office of Information
14 Technology, ex officio, or the officer’s designee;

15 (3) the Director of the Division of Rate Counsel, ex officio, or
16 the director’s designee;

17 (4) one member of the Senate to be appointed by the President
18 of the Senate;

19 (5) one member of the General Assembly to be appointed by the
20 Speaker of the General Assembly;

21 (6) three public members to be appointed by the President of the
22 Senate, who shall include an individual with expertise in
23 community broadband networks and infrastructure and an
24 individual with expertise in municipal and county governance or
25 public utilities, with one individual residing in the northern region
26 of the State, one individual residing in the central region of the
27 State, and one individual residing in the southern region of the
28 State; and

29 (7) three public members to be appointed by the Speaker of the
30 General Assembly, who shall include at least one individual with
31 expertise in community broadband networks and infrastructure and
32 an individual with expertise in municipal and county governance or
33 public utilities, with one individual residing in the northern region
34 of the State, one individual residing in the central region of the
35 State, and one individual residing in the southern region of the
36 State.

37 b. Any vacancy in the membership of the commission shall be
38 filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was
39 made.

40 c. Members of the commission shall serve without
41 compensation but shall be reimbursed for necessary and reasonable
42 expenses incurred in the performance of their duties pursuant to this
43 act within the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made
44 available to the commission for its purposes.

45 d. For the purposes of this act, “community broadband
46 network” means a local shared network consisting of a series of
47 interlinked computers that allow persons with devices connected to
48 a wired network within the area served to gain entry to the wider

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1 Internet through high speed Internet service connections at
2 designated access points.

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4 2. The commission shall organize as soon as possible after the
5 appointment of a majority of the commission's members and shall
6 meet at the call of the chairperson at the times and in the places it
7 may deem appropriate and necessary to fulfill its duties.

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9 3. The commission shall evaluate the feasibility of establishing
10 community broadband networks in this State. The commission
11 shall be responsible for, but not be limited to, the following:

12 (1) considering whether leasing or purchasing established
13 broadband infrastructure, such as, but not limited to, unused fiber
14 optic cable and unused broadcast television signal space, is more
15 advantageous in creating a faster network;

16 (2) considering whether establishing a community broadband
17 municipal or county agency or a non-profit corporation is more
18 appropriate to administer the community broadband network;

19 (3) evaluating the different methods, including legislation and
20 contracts with private companies, that other municipalities or
21 counties in this country have used to implement community
22 broadband networks;

23 (4) determining the most cost effective method in which to
24 establish community broadband networks, with a cost estimate for
25 the local government and a rate estimate for paying customers; and

26 (5) exploring all possible federal, State, and private funding
27 sources for the establishment of community broadband networks in
28 this State.

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30 4. The commission shall be entitled to call to its assistance and
31 avail itself of the services of the officials and employees of the
32 State and its political subdivisions and their departments, boards,
33 bureaus, commissions, and agencies as it may require and as may be
34 available to it for the purposes of the commission. The Board of
35 Public Utilities shall provide staff support services to the
36 commission.

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38 5. The commission shall report its findings, conclusions, and
39 recommendations to the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of
40 P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the Legislature no later than one
41 year following the first meeting of the commission. The
42 commission shall expire upon the submission of the commission's
43 report, pursuant to this section.

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45 6. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire upon
46 the submission by the commission of its report pursuant to section 5
47 of this act.

STATEMENT

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3 This bill establishes the “Community Broadband Study
4 Commission” (commission). Under the bill, the commission is to
5 evaluate the feasibility of establishing community broadband
6 networks in this State and is responsible for the following: 1)
7 considering whether leasing or purchasing established broadband
8 infrastructure, such as, but not limited to, unused fiber optic cable
9 and unused broadcast television signal space, is more advantageous
10 in creating a faster network; 2) considering whether establishing a
11 community broadband municipal or county agency or a non-profit
12 corporation is more appropriate to administer the community
13 broadband network; 3) evaluating the different methods, including
14 legislation and contracts with private companies, that other
15 municipalities or counties in this country have used to implement
16 community broadband networks; 4) determining the most cost
17 effective method in which to establish community broadband
18 networks, with a cost estimate for the local government and a rate
19 estimate for paying customers; and 5) exploring all possible federal,
20 State, and private funding sources for the establishment of
21 community broadband networks in the State.

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