

SENATE BILL REPORT

E2SHB 1698

As of March 19, 2009

Title: An act relating to broadband adoption and deployment.

Brief Description: Regarding broadband adoption and deployment.

Sponsors: House Committee on Finance (originally sponsored by Representatives Hudgins and McCoy).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/10/09, 95-1.

Committee Activity: Economic Development, Trade & Innovation: 3/19/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE & INNOVATION

Staff: Jack Brummel (786-7428)

Background: In 2008 the Department of Information Services (DIS) was directed to convene a High-Speed Internet Strategy Work Group and work with it to develop a statewide High-Speed Internet Deployment and Adoption Strategy. DIS and the work group released the strategy in December of 2008. Included in the strategy were recommendations that the Community Technology Opportunity Program be expanded, that the state seek funding in the form of grants and donations from a variety of entities, and that DIS be authorized to coordinate the entire deployment and adoption strategy.

In 2008 Congress passed the Broadband Data Improvement Act (Act). Part of the Act directed the Secretary of Commerce to make competitive grants available to states to support identification and tracking of availability and adoption of broadband services. Any competitive grants awarded would require a 20 percent match of nonfederal funding.

The Act also required the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to provide eligible entities with electronic access to aggregate data collected by the FCC from broadband service providers. "Eligible entity" is defined as an entity that is (1) either a state agency or instrumentality of the state, a nonprofit organization, or certain independent agencies; and (2) the single eligible entity designated by the state to receive such a grant.

Summary of Bill: DIS may continue the work of the 2008 High-Speed Internet Strategy Work Group to implement high-speed internet deployment and adoption strategies, subject to available funding. These strategies may include:

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- developing low-cost internet access programs for families or nonprofit entities;
- securing funding for technology literacy, digital media literacy, and digital inclusion programs;
- identifying broadband demand opportunities in communities;
- developing last-mile technology loan programs aimed at small businesses or businesses in underserved areas; and
- establishing low-cost hardware, software, and internet purchasing programs.

DIS is designated as the single eligible entity for purposes of the federal Broadband Data Improvement Act. The DIS may apply for and receive federal funding for broadband adoption and deployment opportunities.

Subject to available state or federal funding, DIS must (1) track residential, nonprofit organization and business adoption of high-speed internet, computers, and related information technology; and (2) identify barriers to adoption of broadband services and related information technology.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.