

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 429 Session of 2017

INTRODUCED BY PHILLIPS-HILL, SNYDER, BIZZARRO, R. BROWN, DAVIS, DOWLING, DRISCOLL, A. HARRIS, IRVIN, JAMES, LONGIETTI, RAPP, RYAN, THOMAS, NEILSON, PICKETT, WARD, GROVE, WHEELAND, BOBACK, ROZZI, ROEBUCK, NESBIT, C. QUINN, NELSON, CAUSER, SCHLOSSBERG, BARRAR, ROAE AND BRADFORD, AUGUST 15, 2017

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, APRIL 10, 2018

A RESOLUTION

1 Establishing a legislative task force on the delivery of high-
2 speed broadband services and directing the Joint State
3 Government Commission to establish an advisory committee to
4 conduct a study on the delivery of high-speed broadband
5 services in unserved areas and underserved areas of this
6 Commonwealth and to report its findings and recommendations
7 to the House of Representatives.

8 WHEREAS, Effective economic development today requires
9 unprecedented levels of collaboration and communication among
10 State and local government, business, education, health care,
11 tourism and community leaders; and

12 WHEREAS, High-speed Internet access has become an essential
13 element of economic vitality; and

14 WHEREAS, High-speed broadband availability increases
15 individual worker productivity, breaks down the traditional
16 geographic barriers to jobs and careers in high-paying fields
17 and connects Pennsylvania businesses to international markets
18 around the world; and

1 WHEREAS, Small towns and rural communities across this
2 Commonwealth are the cradle of the best of American ingenuity,
3 potential and values; and

4 WHEREAS, Without sufficient access to broadband and a high
5 level of use of available technology, these small towns and
6 rural communities and their residents will remain
7 technologically and economically isolated and competitively
8 disadvantaged; and

9 WHEREAS, The availability of high-speed broadband in
10 Pennsylvania is continuing to increase across multiple
11 technological platforms, but certain locations and communities
12 are either underserved, having insufficient broadband speeds to
13 fully leverage the benefits of the technology, or are unserved
14 altogether; and

15 WHEREAS, Eliminating unserved areas and underserved areas in
16 this Commonwealth will provide educational, economic, health,
17 governance and public safety benefits to all residents; and

18 WHEREAS, The basic requirements for successfully expanding
19 the benefits of high-speed broadband to all residents of this
20 Commonwealth are:

21 (1) access to computers, whether privately owned or
22 leased or provided at public locations as a public benefit;

23 (2) access to reliable broadband services at affordable
24 prices and at speeds required for current and future
25 applications; and

26 (3) knowledge to effectively use those computers and the
27 Internet;

28 and

29 WHEREAS, High-speed broadband infrastructure:

30 (1) allows communities to engage the world with their

1 goods and services;

2 (2) allows industries which are reliant upon traditional
3 manufacturing to use the Internet to expand their markets and
4 make their operations even more efficient;

5 (3) promotes the use of agricultural technology to help
6 farmers:

7 (i) maintain online field, mapping, water
8 management, livestock and accounting records; and

9 (ii) develop machinery that can operate virtually on
10 its own; and

11 (4) allows professionals in rural communities to work or
12 run businesses from their homes;

13 and

14 WHEREAS, High-speed broadband brings educational
15 opportunities, improved health care, more effective government
16 services and a better quality of life to all residents of this
17 Commonwealth; and

18 WHEREAS, Companies selling technology-intensive products and
19 services, or companies with technologically advanced operations,
20 generally provide faster growth in employment and income than
21 companies without such capabilities; and

22 WHEREAS, Studies show that as much as 85% of the growth in
23 per capita income over the past 150 years has resulted from
24 technological change; and

25 WHEREAS, Technology-intensive private sector jobs on average
26 pay wages which are 85% to 95% higher than wages paid for
27 private sector jobs that are not technology-intensive; and

28 WHEREAS, The President and Congress gave the Federal
29 Communications Commission (FCC) several tasks to complete in the
30 effort to make broadband or high-speed access to the Internet

1 available to all Americans, based on the belief that every
2 American needs to have access to broadband to have the doors of
3 economic and social opportunity open to them, which required the
4 FCC to:

5 (1) develop a forward-looking national broadband plan to
6 ensure that all Americans have access to broadband
7 capability;

8 (2) contribute to efforts of the United States
9 Department of Commerce and the United States Department of
10 Agriculture to award \$7.2 billion in grants, loans and loan
11 guarantees to hasten the introduction of the facilities
12 needed to provide broadband and educate consumers to use this
13 infrastructure; and

14 (3) collect and report far more detailed and
15 comprehensive information on the status of broadband
16 deployment, adoption and use, including how broadband service
17 in the United States compares to broadband service in other
18 countries;

19 and

20 WHEREAS, The Commonwealth's efforts to secure the
21 availability of high-speed broadband throughout urban, suburban
22 and rural areas of this Commonwealth has been fragmented,
23 resulting in a lack of coordination among multiple State
24 agencies and commissions overseeing various broadband-related
25 programs, projects and Federal and State funding; therefore be
26 it

27 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives establish a
28 legislative task force on the delivery of high-speed broadband
29 services; and be it further

30 RESOLVED, That the task force be comprised of the chairperson

1 and minority chairperson of the Consumer Affairs Committee of
2 the House of Representatives or a designee of the chairperson or
3 minority chairperson; and be it further

4 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the Joint
5 State Government Commission to assist the task force and conduct
6 a study on the delivery of high-speed broadband services in
7 unserved areas and underserved areas of this Commonwealth; and
8 be it further

9 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission, as part
10 of its study, establish an advisory committee consisting of
11 approximately 25 members from across this Commonwealth,
12 including:

13 (1) the Secretary of Agriculture or a designee;

14 (2) the Secretary of Community and Economic Development
15 or a designee;

16 (3) the Deputy Secretary for Technology and Innovation
17 in the Department of Community and Economic Development or a
18 designee;

19 (4) the Secretary of Education or a designee;

20 (5) the Secretary of Health or a designee;

21 (6) the Secretary of Labor and Industry or a designee;

22 (7) the Secretary of Policy and Planning or a designee;

23 (8) the ~~Secretary of Administration or a designee;~~ <--

24 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE PENNSYLVANIA OFFICE OF BROADBAND <--
25 INITIATIVES OR A DESIGNEE;

26 (9) the executive director of the Governor's Center for
27 Local Government Services of the Pennsylvania Municipal
28 League or a designee;

29 (10) the chairperson of the Pennsylvania Public Utility
30 Commission or a designee;

1 (11) the vice chairperson of the Pennsylvania Public
2 Utility Commission or a designee;

3 (12) the Small Business Advocate or a designee;

4 (13) the Consumer Advocate or a designee;

5 (14) the director of the Center for Rural Pennsylvania
6 or a designee;

7 (15) representatives of broadband service providers and
8 any related cable, wireless or other technology industries or
9 associations within this Commonwealth; and

10 (16) representatives of other departments, agencies,
11 boards, commissions or entities that the Joint State
12 Government Commission deems appropriate in conducting the
13 study under this resolution;

14 and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission develop
16 reports in collaboration with the advisory committee which, at a
17 minimum, include the following:

18 (1) background information which addresses the matters
19 set forth in this resolution;

20 (2) recommendations to:

21 (i) improve the delivery of high-speed broadband
22 services to unserved areas and underserved areas of this
23 Commonwealth; and

24 (ii) extend the benefits of advanced high-speed
25 broadband technology to every community in this
26 Commonwealth through collaborative partnerships with
27 governmental and private sector stakeholders; and

28 (3) proposed legislation which relates to the proposed
29 recommendations and specifically addresses the delivery of
30 high-speed broadband services to rural high-cost areas of

1 this Commonwealth;

2 and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission may, as
4 it deems necessary, hold informational meetings to receive
5 testimony from professionals or consumers with expertise or
6 knowledge in the matters described in this resolution; and be it
7 further

8 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission issue an
9 initial report of its findings and recommendations to the House
10 of Representatives no later than one year after the adoption of
11 this resolution; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission issue
13 four additional annual reports of its findings and
14 recommendations to the House of Representatives, each of which
15 shall be issued no later than one year after the issuance of the
16 immediately prior report.