
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 47 Session of
2019

INTRODUCED BY PHILLIPS-HILL, YAW, GORDNER, HUTCHINSON, COSTA,
BAKER, AUMENT, STEFANO, WHITE, BROWNE, HAYWOOD AND
BARTOLOTTA, APRIL 29, 2019

REFERRED TO COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY, APRIL 29, 2019

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 Senate.

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

19 WHEREAS, Small towns and rural communities across this
20 Commonwealth are the cradle of the best of American ingenuity,

1 potential and values; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

24 (3) knowledge to effectively use those computers and the
25 Internet;

26 and

27 WHEREAS, High-speed broadband infrastructure:

28 (1) allows communities to engage the world with their
29 goods and services;

30 (2) allows industries which are reliant upon traditional

1 manufacturing to use the Internet to expand their markets and
2 make their operations even more efficient;

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

5 (i) maintain online field, mapping, water
6 management, livestock and accounting records; and

7 (ii) develop machinery that can operate virtually on
8 its own; and

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

11 and

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

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

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

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

26 WHEREAS, The President and Congress, in the effort to make
27 broadband or high-speed access to the Internet available to all
28 Americans, based on the belief that every American needs to have
29 access to broadband to have the doors of economic and social
30 opportunity open to them, required the Federal Communications

1 Commission to:

2 (1) develop a forward-looking national broadband plan to
3 ensure that all Americans have access to broadband
4 capability;

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

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

16 and

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

24 RESOLVED, That the Senate establish a legislative task force
25 on the delivery of high-speed broadband services; and be it
26 further

27 RESOLVED, That the task force be comprised of the chairperson
28 and minority chairperson of the Communications and Technology
29 Committee of the Senate or a designee of the chairperson or
30 minority chairperson; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That the Senate direct the Joint State Government
2 Commission to assist the task force and conduct a study on the
3 delivery of high-speed broadband services in unserved areas and
4 underserved areas of this Commonwealth; and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission, as part
6 of its study, establish an advisory committee consisting of
7 approximately 25 members from across this Commonwealth,
8 including:

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

10 (2) the Secretary of Community and Economic Development
11 or a designee;

12 (3) the Deputy Secretary for Technology and Innovation
13 in the Department of Community and Economic Development or a
14 designee;

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

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

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

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

19 (8) the executive director of the Pennsylvania Office of
20 Broadband Initiatives or a designee;

21 (9) the executive director of the Governor's Center for
22 Local Government Services of the Pennsylvania Municipal
23 League or a designee;

24 (10) the chairperson of the Pennsylvania Public Utility
25 Commission or a designee;

26 (11) the vice chairperson of the Pennsylvania Public
27 Utility Commission or a designee;

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

29 (13) the Consumer Advocate or a designee;

30 (14) the director of the Center for Rural Pennsylvania

1 or a designee;

2 (15) representatives of broadband service providers and
3 any related cable, wireless or other technology industries or
4 associations within this Commonwealth; and

5 (16) representatives of other departments, agencies,
6 boards, commissions or entities that the Joint State
7 Government Commission deems appropriate in conducting the
8 study under this resolution;

9 and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission develop
11 reports in collaboration with the advisory committee which, at a
12 minimum, include the following:

13 (1) background information which addresses the matters
14 set forth in this resolution;

15 (2) recommendations to:

16 (i) improve the delivery of high-speed broadband
17 services to unserved areas and underserved areas of this
18 Commonwealth; and

19 (ii) extend the benefits of advanced high-speed
20 broadband technology to every community in this
21 Commonwealth through collaborative partnerships with
22 governmental and private sector stakeholders; and

23 (3) proposed legislation which relates to the proposed
24 recommendations and specifically addresses the delivery of
25 high-speed broadband services to rural high-cost areas of
26 this Commonwealth;

27 and be it further

28 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission may, as
29 it deems necessary, hold informational meetings to receive
30 testimony from professionals or consumers with expertise or

1 knowledge in the matters described in this resolution; and be it
2 further

3 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission issue an
4 initial report of its findings and recommendations to the Senate
5 no later than one year after the adoption of this resolution;
6 and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission issue
8 four additional annual reports of its findings and
9 recommendations to the Senate, each of which shall be issued no
10 later than one year after the issuance of the immediately prior
11 report.