
**Technology, Energy & Communications
Committee**

HB 1701

Brief Description: Authorizing the department of information services to engage in high-speed internet activities.

Sponsors: Representatives Hudgins, McCoy and Hasegawa.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Information Services to implement a high-speed internet strategy, subject to available funding
- Repeals provisions that restrict government entities from collecting certain high-speed internet infrastructure information.

Hearing Date: 2/4/09

Staff: Kara Durbin (786-7133)

Background:

Federal Broadband Efforts

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 non-federal 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 non-profit organization, or certain independent agencies; and (2) the single eligible entity designated by the state to receive such a grant.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

While the Act provided authorization for funding, no funds have been appropriated by the federal government to implement the Act.

State Broadband Efforts

In 2008, the Legislature directed the Department of Information Services (DIS) to convene a work group to identify and develop strategies for high-speed internet deployment and adoption. The DIS established the High-Speed Internet Strategy Work Group (Work Group) in June of 2008, which included representatives from government, community, education, business, non-profit, economic development, health care, technology, union, public utility, and service provider interests. The Work Group met seven times between July of 2008 and November of 2008. It issued its final report to the Legislature on December 1, 2008.

In its report, the DIS, in concurrence with the Work Group, made the following recommendations:

1. *Defining High-Speed Internet Service:* The state should adopt a definition of "high-speed internet service" that is consistent with the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) broadband speed tiers in the upload and download direction, except for the bottom tier. High-speed internet should also be defined by the applications it can enable.
2. *Mapping:* The state should consider mapping at the census tract level, rather than the census block level. The map should be produced by a third-party entity to ensure the confidentiality of proprietary and competitively sensitive data. The map should provide adoption information, availability information, the technology used, and available speed tiers. The map should provide a link to the service provider's web site to provide pricing data. An interactive, web-based map also should be available to allow queries and inputs from consumers.
3. *Local Technology Teams:* The DIS should coordinate Local Technology Planning Teams (LTPTs) and assist the LTPTs in conducting local needs assessments, developing and implementing strategic plans, and identifying funding sources.
4. *Spurring Development:* The state should conduct several initiatives to spur the development of high-speed internet in the state, which may include expanding the Community Technology Opportunities Program, soliciting funding sources, and establishing low-cost hardware and software programs.
5. *Benchmarks:* The DIS should oversee tracking of residential, business, and statewide high-speed internet adoption. A variety of metrics and benchmarks should be used to measure the success of the state's high-speed internet deployment and adoption strategy.

The final report also recommended that legislation be introduced to: (1) authorize the DIS coordinate implementation of the high-speed internet deployment and adoption strategy, as outlined in the report; and (2) provide initial funding to support implementation.

Summary of Bill:

The Department of Information Services (DIS) must implement a high-speed internet deployment and adoption strategy, subject to available funding.

The DIS may accept aggregated data from telecommunications or high-speed internet infrastructure providers in order to create a geographic information system (GIS) map of high-speed internet infrastructure, service availability, and adoption.

The DIS may create an interactive web site to allow residents to self-report whether high-speed internet is available at their home or residence and at what speed.

The DIS is designated as an "eligible entity" for purposes of the federal Broadband Data Improvement Act. If federal funds are made available for broadband or high-speed internet purposes, the DIS is authorized to receive those funds.

Provisions in current law that restrict the DIS or other government entities from collecting certain high-speed internet infrastructure information are repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 29, 2009.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.