

By Senator Burgess

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to broadband Internet; amending s.
3 364.0135, F.S.; requiring the Florida Office of
4 Broadband's strategic plan to include short-term and
5 long-term goals for increasing the availability of and
6 access to broadband Internet service in this state;
7 providing requirements for the development of the
8 plan; requiring the updated plan to be submitted to
9 the Governor, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court,
10 and the Legislature by a specified date; requiring the
11 plan to be updated biennially; requiring the office to
12 provide technical and planning assistance related to
13 broadband infrastructure to rural communities;
14 providing an effective date.

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16 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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18 Section 1. Subsection (4) of section 364.0135, Florida
19 Statutes, is amended to read:

20 364.0135 Promotion of broadband adoption; Florida Office of
21 Broadband.—

22 (4) FLORIDA OFFICE OF BROADBAND.—The Florida Office of
23 Broadband is created within the Division of Community
24 Development in the department for the purpose of developing,
25 marketing, and promoting broadband Internet services in the
26 state. The office, in the performance of its duties, shall do
27 all of the following:

28 (a) Create a strategic plan that has short-term and long-
29 term goals and strategies for increasing and improving the

20-01385-21

20212004__

30 availability of and access to use of broadband Internet service
31 in this the state. In development of the plan, the department
32 shall incorporate applicable federal broadband activities,
33 including any efforts or initiatives of the Federal
34 Communications Commission, to improve broadband Internet service
35 in this state. The plan must include a process to review and
36 verify public input regarding transmission speeds and
37 availability of broadband Internet service throughout the state.
38 The plan must also identify available federal funding sources
39 for the expansion or improvement of broadband. The strategic
40 plan must be submitted to the Governor, the Chief Justice of the
41 Supreme Court, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of
42 the House of Representatives by June 30, 2022. The strategic
43 plan must be updated biennially thereafter.

44 (b) Build and facilitate local technology planning teams or
45 partnerships with members representing cross-sections of the
46 community, which may include, but are not limited to,
47 representatives from the following organizations and industries:
48 libraries, K-12 education, colleges and universities, local
49 health care providers, private businesses, community
50 organizations, economic development organizations, local
51 governments, tourism, parks and recreation, and agriculture.

52 (c) Provide technical and planning assistance related to
53 broadband infrastructure to rural communities.

54 (d)~~(e)~~ Encourage the use of broadband Internet service,
55 especially in the rural, unserved, or underserved communities of
56 the state through grant programs having effective strategies to
57 facilitate the statewide deployment of broadband Internet
58 service. For any grants to be awarded, priority must be given to

20-01385-21

20212004__

59 projects that:

60 1. Provide access to broadband education, awareness,
61 training, access, equipment, and support to libraries, schools,
62 colleges and universities, health care providers, and community
63 support organizations.

64 2. Encourage the sustainable adoption of broadband in
65 primarily underserved areas by removing barriers to entry.

66 3. Work toward encouraging investments in establishing
67 affordable and sustainable broadband Internet service in
68 underserved areas of the state.

69 4. Facilitate the development of applications, programs,
70 and services, including, but not limited to, telework,
71 telemedicine, and e-learning to increase the usage of, and
72 demand for, broadband Internet service in the state.

73 (e)~~(d)~~ Monitor, participate in, and provide input in
74 proceedings of the Federal Communications Commission and other
75 federal agencies related to the geographic availability and
76 deployment of broadband Internet service in the state as
77 necessary to ensure that this information is accurately
78 presented and that rural, unserved, and underserved areas of the
79 state are best positioned to benefit from federal and state
80 broadband deployment programs.

81 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2021.