

By the Committee on Commerce and Tourism; and Senator Burgess

577-02868-21

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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 appropriation; providing an effective
15 date.

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

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

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

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

29 (a) Create a strategic plan that has short-term and long-

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

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

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

55 (d) ~~(e)~~ Encourage the use of broadband Internet service,
56 especially in the rural, unserved, or underserved communities of
57 the state through grant programs having effective strategies to
58 facilitate the statewide deployment of broadband Internet

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59 service. For any grants to be awarded, priority must be given to
60 projects that:

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

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

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

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

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

82 Section 2. For the 2021-2022 fiscal year, the sum of \$1.4
83 million in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the State
84 Economic Enhancement and Development Trust Fund to the
85 Department of Economic Opportunity for the purpose of
86 commissioning a broadband feasibility study and developing a
87 strategic plan as required in s. 364.0135, Florida Statutes.

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Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2021.