

ASSEMBLY, No. 850

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman NICHOLAS CHIARAVALLOTTI

District 31 (Hudson)

Assemblyman ROBERT J. KARABINCHAK

District 18 (Middlesex)

Assemblywoman VERLINA REYNOLDS-JACKSON

District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblyman Benson

SYNOPSIS

Establishes "Community Broadband Study Commission."

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 8/10/2020)

1 AN ACT establishing the “Community Broadband Study
2 Commission.

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4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. a. There is established the “Community Broadband Study
8 Commission.” The commission shall consist of 11 members as
9 follows:

10 (1) the President of the Board of Public Utilities, ex officio, or
11 the president’s designee, who shall serve as chairperson of the
12 commission;

13 (2) the Chief Technology Officer of the Office of Information
14 Technology, ex officio, or the officer’s designee;

15 (3) the Director of the Division of Rate Counsel, ex officio, or
16 the director’s designee;

17 (4) two members of the Senate to be appointed by the President
18 of the Senate, which members shall not be of the same political
19 party;

20 (5) two members of the General Assembly to be appointed by
21 the Speaker of the General Assembly, which members shall not be
22 of the same political party;

23 (6) two public members to be appointed by the President of the
24 Senate, who shall include an individual with expertise in
25 community broadband networks and infrastructure and an
26 individual with expertise in municipal and county governance or
27 public utilities; and

28 (7) two public members to be appointed by the Speaker of the
29 General Assembly, who shall include at least one individual with
30 expertise in community broadband networks and infrastructure and
31 an individual with expertise in municipal and county governance or
32 public utilities.

33 b. Any vacancy in the membership of the commission shall be
34 filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was
35 made.

36 c. Members of the commission shall serve without
37 compensation but shall be reimbursed for necessary and reasonable
38 expenses incurred in the performance of their duties pursuant to this
39 act within the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made
40 available to the commission for its purposes.

41 d. For the purposes of this act, “community broadband
42 network” means a local shared network consisting of a series of
43 interlinked computers that allow persons with devices connected to
44 a wired network within the area served to gain entry to the wider
45 Internet through high speed Internet service connections at
46 designated access points.

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48 2. The commission shall organize as soon as possible after the
49 appointment of a majority of the commission’s members and shall

1 meet at the call of the chairperson at the times and in the places it
2 may deem appropriate and necessary to fulfill its duties.

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4 3. The commission shall evaluate the feasibility of establishing
5 community broadband networks in this State. The commission
6 shall be responsible for, but not be limited to, the following:

7 (1) considering whether leasing or purchasing established
8 broadband infrastructure, such as unused fiber optic cable, is more
9 advantageous in creating a faster network;

10 (2) considering whether establishing a community broadband
11 municipal or county agency or a non-profit corporation is more
12 appropriate to administer the community broadband network;

13 (3) evaluating the different methods, including legislation and
14 contracts with private companies, that other municipalities or
15 counties in this country have used to implement community
16 broadband networks;

17 (4) determining the most cost effective method in which to
18 establish community broadband networks, with a cost estimate for
19 the local government and a rate estimate for paying customers; and

20 (5) exploring all possible federal, State, and private funding
21 sources for the establishment of community broadband networks in
22 this State.

23

24 4. The commission shall be entitled to call to its assistance and
25 avail itself of the services of the officials and employees of the
26 State and its political subdivisions and their departments, boards,
27 bureaus, commissions, and agencies as it may require and as may be
28 available to it for the purposes of the commission. The Board of
29 Public Utilities shall provide staff support services to the
30 commission.

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32 5. The commission shall report its findings, conclusions, and
33 recommendations to the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of
34 P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the Legislature no later than one
35 year following the first meeting of the commission. The
36 commission shall expire upon the submission of the commission's
37 report, pursuant to this section.

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39 6. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire upon
40 the submission by the commission of its report pursuant to section 5
41 of this act.

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STATEMENT

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46 This bill establishes the "Community Broadband Study
47 Commission."

48 The commission is to evaluate the feasibility of establishing
49 community broadband networks in this State and is responsible for

1 the following: (1) considering whether leasing or purchasing
2 established broadband infrastructure, such as unused fiber optic
3 cable, is more advantageous in creating a faster network; (2)
4 considering whether establishing a community broadband municipal
5 or county agency or a non-profit corporation is more appropriate to
6 administer the community broadband network; (3) evaluating the
7 different methods, including legislation and contracts with private
8 companies, that other municipalities or counties in this country have
9 used to implement community broadband networks; (4) determining
10 the most cost effective method in which to establish community
11 broadband networks, with a cost estimate for the local government
12 and a rate estimate for paying customers; and (5) exploring all
13 possible federal, State, and private funding sources for the
14 establishment of community broadband networks in the State.

15 The commission is to report its findings, conclusions, and
16 recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature no later than
17 one year following the first meeting of the commission. The
18 commission and this act expire upon the submission of the
19 commission's report.