

**ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION No. 13**

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman PARKER SPACE

District 24 (Morris, Sussex and Warren)

Assemblyman HAROLD "HAL" J. WIRTHS

District 24 (Morris, Sussex and Warren)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblymen McClellan and Simonsen

SYNOPSIS

Urges BPU to investigate broadband Internet and landline telephone services in State's rural communities; urges State Board of Agriculture and Department of Agriculture to explore ways these services can be brought to State's rural communities.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 8/24/2020)

- 1 **A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION** urging the Board of Public Utilities
2 to investigate the status of high-speed broadband Internet and
3 landline telephone services in New Jersey’s rural communities
4 and urging the State Board of Agriculture and the Department of
5 Agriculture to explore ways in which reliable high-speed
6 broadband Internet and landline telephone services can be
7 brought to New Jersey’s rural communities.
8
- 9 **WHEREAS**, Today’s modern farming operators are as likely to sell
10 their agricultural products direct-to-the-public at on-farm locations
11 as they are to sell them to wholesale brokers or directly to retailers;
12 and
- 13 **WHEREAS**, An increasing number of New Jersey farm operators are
14 incorporating agricultural tourism components on their farms to
15 attract consumers to their farm property to either purchase products
16 or partake in agricultural tourism events, which requires these farm
17 operators to employ advertising over various forms of media; and
- 18 **WHEREAS**, Social media and other forms of advertising over the
19 Internet have become increasingly popular ways to reach the exact
20 type of consumers that are interested in agricultural tourism; and
- 21 **WHEREAS**, The ability to maximize Internet-based advertising
22 depends, especially in rural areas where farms are concentrated,
23 upon connecting to adequate high-speed broadband Internet and
24 other broadband services; and
- 25 **WHEREAS**, Today’s agricultural operations also rely on high-speed
26 broadband Internet and other broadband services for many vital
27 functions beyond advertising, such as remote sensing of field and
28 greenhouse conditions, remote control of equipment, shipping and
29 receiving control and coordination, obtaining current weather
30 information that is critical to the application of crop inputs, and for
31 numerous other purposes; and
- 32 **WHEREAS**, A lack of adequate broadband communications capability
33 inhibits or precludes the use of these tools that can enhance a farm’s
34 efficiency and viability, thereby creating an inequity for farmers
35 living in areas underserved by adequate telecommunications
36 capability; and
- 37 **WHEREAS**, As technology continues to grow in importance to
38 agriculture, the need for adequate high-speed broadband Internet
39 and other broadband service capability will grow in importance to
40 successful farming; and
- 41 **WHEREAS**, Rural areas of New Jersey have been especially
42 underserved by broadband service from Internet service providers;
43 and
- 44 **WHEREAS**, The lack of high speed broadband in rural areas of New
45 Jersey negatively effects not only farmers but all residents, students,
46 businesses, and governmental entities who reside or are located in
47 rural areas and puts rural areas at a distinct disadvantage in
48 attracting economic development; and

ACR13 SPACE, WIRTHS

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1 **WHEREAS**, The State Board of Agriculture has heard numerous
2 complaints of diminished Internet, wireless, and landline service
3 quality in rural areas of New Jersey; and

4 **WHEREAS**, The State Board of Agriculture has unanimously passed a
5 resolution calling upon the Board of Public Utilities to investigate
6 the status of high-speed Internet and landline telephone services in
7 New Jersey's rural communities; and

8 **WHEREAS**, The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA)
9 Rural Development Office for New Jersey has informed the New
10 Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) that to help in addressing
11 the lack of rural broadband Internet service in the State, the USDA
12 needs guidance from the NJDA to create a mapping function that
13 could help rural areas of New Jersey be eligible for grant programs
14 offered by the USDA for broadband Internet service availability;
15 and

16 **WHEREAS**, The State Board of Agriculture and the NJDA should
17 explore ways in which adequate and reliable high-speed broadband
18 Internet and landline telephone services can be brought to New
19 Jersey's rural communities, so that the State's farmers, residents,
20 students, businesses, and governmental entities who reside or are
21 located in rural areas will be better positioned to maximize the
22 overall use of technology to improve the efficiency and viability of
23 their farms and communities while increasing economic
24 development opportunities; now, therefore,

25
26 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the General Assembly of the State of New*
27 *Jersey (the Senate concurring):*
28

29 1. The Board of Public Utilities is respectfully urged to conduct
30 an investigation of the status of high-speed broadband Internet and
31 landline telephone services in New Jersey's rural communities.
32

33 2. The State Board of Agriculture and the Department of
34 Agriculture are respectfully urged to continue exploring ways in
35 which adequate and reliable high-speed broadband Internet and
36 landline telephone services can be brought to New Jersey's rural
37 communities, so that the State's farmers, residents, students,
38 businesses, and governmental entities who reside or are located in
39 rural areas will be better positioned to maximize the overall use of
40 technology to improve the efficiency and viability of their farms
41 and communities while increasing economic development
42 opportunities.
43

44 3. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
45 shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly or the
46 Secretary of the Senate to each commissioner of the Board of Public
47 Utilities, to each member of the State Board of Agriculture, and to
48 the Secretary of Agriculture.

1 STATEMENT

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3 This concurrent resolution urges the Board of Public Utilities
4 (BPU) to conduct an investigation of the status of high-speed
5 broadband Internet and landline telephone services in New Jersey’s
6 rural communities. Further, the concurrent resolution urges the
7 State Board of Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture to
8 continue exploring ways in which adequate and reliable high-speed
9 broadband Internet and landline telephone services can be brought
10 to New Jersey’s rural communities, so that the State’s farmers,
11 residents, students, businesses, and governmental entities who
12 reside or are located in rural areas will be better positioned to
13 maximize the overall use of technology to improve the efficiency
14 and viability of their farms and communities while increasing
15 economic development opportunities.