STATE OF NEW YORK

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2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

February 17, 2021

Introduced by Sens. RYAN, BENJAMIN, BIAGGI, BORRELLO, GALLIVAN, HINCHEY, JORDAN, MAY, SEPULVEDA, SKOUFIS, STEC -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Energy and Telecommunications -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee -- reported favorably from said committee, ordered to first and second report, ordered to a third reading, amended and ordered reprinted, retaining its place in the order of third reading

AN ACT to amend the public service law, in relation to directing the public service commission to review broadband and fiber optic services within the state

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "comprehensive broadband connectivity act".

§ 2. Legislative findings. The legislature hereby finds and declares that more granular and adequate broadband mapping is an essential next step in continuing the progress of expanding access to high-quality, affordable broadband access in New York state. The New York Broadband Program has helped expand broadband service to hundreds of thousands of previously underserved New Yorkers. However, many still lack access. Due to a lack of comprehensive data, measuring the true extent of this problem has been hampered by the limitations of federal data on broadband access. More accurate and comprehensive data is necessary to complete the state's work in ensuring truly universal broadband access.

§ 3. The public service law is amended by adding a new section 224-c to read as follows:

§ 224-c. Broadband and fiber optic services. 1. For the purposes of this section:

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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(a) The term "served" means any location with at least two internet service providers and at least one such provider offers high-speed internet service.

(b) The term "underserved" means any location which has fewer than two internet service providers, or has internet speeds of at least 25 megabits per second (mbps) download but less than 100 mbps download available.

(c) The term "unserved" means any location which has no fixed wireless service or wired service with speeds of 25 mbps download or less available.

(d) The term "high-speed internet service" means internet service of at least 100 mbps download and at least 10 mbps upload.

(e) The term "broadband service" shall mean a mass-market retail service that provides the capability to transmit data to and receive data from all or substantially all internet endpoints, including any capabilities that are incidental to and enable the operation of the communications service, but shall not include dial-up service.

(f) The term "location" shall mean a geographic area smaller than a census tract.

(g) The term "internet service provider" shall mean any person, business or organization qualified to do business in this state that provides individuals, corporations, or other entities with the ability to connect to the internet.

2. The commission shall study the availability, affordability and reliability of high-speed internet and broadband services in New York state. The commission shall, to the extent practicable under New York state law:

(a) assess the efficacy and make recommendations regarding levels of competition among providers, as well as any regulatory and statutory barriers, in order to deliver comprehensive statewide access to high-speed internet;

(b) review available technology to identify solutions that best support high-speed internet service in underserved or unserved areas, and make recommendations on ensuring deployment of such technology in underserved and unserved areas;

(c) identify instances where local franchise agreements and legal settlements related to internet access have not been complied with;

(d) identify locations where insufficient access to high-speed internet and/or broadband service, and/or persistent digital divide, is causing negative social or economic impact on the community;

(e) identify locations where the commission believes fiber optic service is necessary for the successful implementation of commission's policies on competition, affordability, and adequate service;

(f) examine any other telecommunications deficiencies affecting broadband service it deems necessary to further the economic and social goals of the state; and

(g) produce, maintain and publish on its website, a detailed internet access map of the state, indicating access to internet service by location. Such map shall include, but not be limited to, the following information for each location:

(i) download and upload speeds advertised and experienced;

(ii) the consistency and reliability of download and upload speeds including latency;

(iii) the types of internet service and technologies available including but not limited to dial-up, broadband, wireless, fiber, coax, or satellite;

(iv) the number of internet service providers available, the price of internet service available; and

(v) any other factors the commission may deem relevant.

3. The commission shall submit a report of its findings and recommendations from the study required in subdivision two of this section, to the governor, the temporary president of the senate and the speaker of the assembly no later than one year after the effective date of this section, and an updated report annually thereafter. Such report shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

(a) the overall number of residences with access to high-speed internet identifying which areas are served, unserved and underserved;

(b) a regional survey of internet service prices in comparison to county-level median income;

(c) an analysis of the affordability of high-speed internet service in New York state;

(d) any relevant usage statistics;

(e) any other metrics or analyses the commission deems necessary in order to assess the availability, affordability and reliability of internet service in New York state; and

(f) the map maintained pursuant to paragraph (g) of subdivision two of this section.

4. The commission shall hold at least four regional public hearings within one year of the effective date of this section, to solicit input from the public and other stakeholders including but not limited to internet service providers, telecommunications concerns, labor organizations, public safety organizations, healthcare, education, agricultural and other businesses or organizations.

5. The commission shall work with internet service providers in the state to prioritize access to broadband and fiber optic services for the communities determined to have experienced negative economic and social impacts due to absent, insufficient, or inadequate broadband or fiber optic service pursuant to subdivision one of this section.

6. To effectuate the purposes of this section, the commission may request and shall receive from any department, division, board, bureau, commission or other agency of the state or any state public authority such assistance, information and data as will enable the commission to carry out its powers and duties under this section.

§ 4. This act shall take effect on the thirtieth day after it shall have become a law.