



HOUSE BILL 349: Develop Broadband Connectivity Plan

2015-2016 General Assembly

Committee:	House Public Utilities	Date:	April 22, 2015
Introduced by:	Reps. Tine, Saine, Hager, Hanes	Prepared by:	Layla Cummings Committee Counsel
Analysis of:	PCS to First Edition H349-CSTS-4		

SUMMARY: *The Proposed Committee Substitute (PCS) to House Bill 349 would require the Office of the State Chief Information Officer (Office) to develop a broadband connectivity plan to increase access to broadband throughout the State and expand the service area that broadband service providers are permitted to provide telephone service to their broadband customers.*

CURRENT LAW AND BILL ANALYSIS:

Section 1 would state the following findings of the General Assembly: the availability of broadband internet access in all North Carolina counties is vital for the continued economic prosperity of the State's citizens; and the development of a plan is the quickest and most efficient way to increase high quality broadband access.

Sections 2-4 would require the Office, through its Office of Digital Infrastructure, and with the assistance of the Department of Transportation, the Department of Administration, the Department of Commerce, North Carolina State University, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, any other relevant state agency, and private sector stakeholders, to develop a State broadband plan including:

- Identification of the most effective and efficient means for deployment, utilization, and adoption of broadband throughout the State.
- A detailed strategy for achieving affordability of broadband service.
- An evaluation of the current status of broadband service deployment across the State.
- Recommendations to foster the deployment, utilization, and adoption of broadband for the purposes of enhancing economic development, education, public safety, health care delivery, energy efficiency, job creation, and government efficiency.

The Office would be required to report the on the State broadband plan, including recommendations for legislative action and cost estimates for achieving the objectives set forth in the plan, no later than May 1, 2016, to the Joint Legislative Committee on Information Technology. Funding to implement these sections would be provided by the Office using available funds in the Information Technology Fund.

Section 5 would allow broadband service providers that provide telephone service within a defined service territory or franchise area may, in any area outside of its defined territory, provide telephone service to a customer with broadband services. This would apply only when the telecommunications or cable provider is not providing broadband service to the customer. Under the current law, broadband service providers may only provide telephone service to their broadband customers in areas contiguous to the providers' defined service territory or franchise area.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This bill would become effective when it becomes law.

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Director



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