

HB 1378 -- BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

SPONSOR: Black (137)

This bill authorizes two or more partnering entities to form a broadband infrastructure improvement district for the delivery of broadband Internet service to their residents. A district has the power to contract with a broadband Internet service provider to provide broadband Internet service to the residents of the district.

If the partnering entities are all municipalities, the proposal must be approved by a majority of qualified voters in each municipality. A district may finance the provision or expansion of broadband Internet service through grants, loans, bonds, or user fees. The bill also establishes the composition and operation of the District Governing Board. Additional municipalities may join a district upon application to the Governing Board. If the Board offers admission to the district, it must specify all terms and conditions upon which admission is predicated. A municipality may withdraw from a district in the same manner.

If the partnering entities include a municipal utility, electric cooperative, or a public utility, the entities may enter into a broadband infrastructure partnership. Partnering entities may provide broadband Internet service within the corporate limits or service territories of any partner and within a two-mile radius of the corporate limits or service territory if 70% of the area does not have broadband service otherwise. A partnership may finance the provision or expansion of broadband Internet service through grants, loans, bonds, user fees, or any other methods that does not negatively impact the cost of service provided to the partnering entities residents, customers, or rate-payers.

This bill is similar to SB 108 and HB 735 (2021).