

HB 2886 -- BROADBAND GRANT PROGRAM

SPONSOR: Riggs

This bill increases the speed requirements for the definitions of an "underserved area" and "unserved area" for the purposes of the Broadband Grant Program and specifies that access to low-Earth-orbit satellites, fixed wireless, or cable is not considered access to broadband internet service.

The bill also requires that projects offering broadband internet speeds of 500 megabits per-second download and upload be given priority in grant awards. Also, any entity that was the second place finisher in any previous federal broadband funds application has the right of first refusal to accept defaulted funds recovered by the State.

Currently, if the Department of Economic Development determines that a broadband provider provides service, has begun construction on service, or has committed to service at a speed of 25 megabits per-second download and three megabits per-second upload, the Department cannot fund a different provider that challenges if the area is served. The bill increases the speed the original provider must provide to be considered served to 500 megabits per-second download and upload.

The Broadband Grant Program currently expires June 30, 2027. The bill extends the program through June 30, 2030.