

High-speed Internet bill on fast track

By [DAVID KIBBE](#)
dkottaway@aol.com
July 31, 2008 6:00 AM

BOSTON — A \$40 million bond bill to bring high-speed Internet service to underserved areas of the state, including Cape Cod, is now on Gov. Deval Patrick's desk.

The House and Senate this week gave the legislation final approval. The bill also establishes the Massachusetts Broadband Institute, within the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, to secure federal and private support to expand broadband.

Patrick originally filed a \$25 million bond bill to expand high-speed service.

A total of 63 towns in Massachusetts have partial or limited access to broadband service, including some areas on Cape Cod. Another 32 towns in western Massachusetts have no access.

Lawmakers added \$15 million for underserved communities to the original \$25 million bond bill. That makes it more likely that \$5 million will be available for a campaign by the nonprofit OpenCape Corp. to bring wireless broadband access to all of Southeastern Massachusetts.

"OpenCape is excited and pleased that the governor and the state Legislature have recognized the need for active involvement in creating this critical infrastructure in all regions of our state," Dan Gallagher, the board chairman of OpenCape, said in a statement.

"We thank them for their leadership and support in this initiative."