

Broadband Bill Unanimously Passes The House
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BOSTON - The House of Representatives and Senate created the Broadband Institute and dedicated \$40 million for the purposes of increasing high speed internet access to communities across the state. The Broadband Institute is charged with investing in unserved and under-served communities.

Currently there are 63 towns in Massachusetts where there is only partial broadband service, and 32 have no access at all. In those 95 communities, over 220,000 households and over 25,000 businesses lack adequate broadband access. This digital divide slows and deters economic development, threatens public safety and health, hinders municipal business and restricts creativity in the classroom.

Representative Daniel Bosley (D-North Adams) said, "This is the culmination of years of work to bring up the telecommunication infrastructure up to speed in my district. Now merchants will have faster access for their electronic transactions and business owners will no longer be at a competitive disadvantage."

The passage of this legislation is intended to demonstrate to business leaders and tech-savvy workers throughout the world that Massachusetts expects to exceed all other states with regard to high-speed Internet access. Now, we can attract businesses to the Commonwealth by assuring them that they and their employees will have competitively priced and premium broadband access regardless of where they locate.

"Broadband providers simply do not have the financial incentive to build out their systems in these parts of our state. Without the public investment provided by this legislation, these communities would have been forced to wait indefinitely, and would fall further behind. Today, we put a stop to that inertia," according to Representative Guyer (D-Dalton)

Representative Smitty Pignatelli (D-Lenox) said, "Today we are one step closer to closing the digital divide that persists in parts of our state, particularly in Western Massachusetts."

Representative Christopher Speranzo (D-Pittsfield) said, "This is crucial for our economic health not only in my district, but the rest of the commonwealth."

The bill awaits the enactment in the Senate and then the signature of the Governor.