

## Statewide broadband bill passes House

Written by Staff Reports  
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SANTA FE – Statewide broadband internet in New Mexico is one step closer to reality with House Bill 10: the Connect New Mexico Act, which institutes a centralized plan for the state to build, manage and deliver broadband internet access to communities across the state.

It includes three main components:

Establishing a centralized Office of Broadband within the Department of Information Technology to coordinate state, local, and federal resources to build new infrastructure and connect every community in New Mexico.

Creating a comprehensive plan that maps out New Mexico's current broadband infrastructure and assesses what it will take to finish the job and connect New Mexico.

Setting a high bar for the quality of internet service New Mexicans deserve and ensuring our communities have the knowledge and technical expertise they need to leverage their internet resources to benefit their local communities.

“The Connect New Mexico Act presents a three-year, centralized plan to connect every community in New Mexico with the high-speed, affordable, broadband internet that's essential to modern life,” sponsor Rep. Natalie Figueroa, D-Albuquerque said.

“The COVID-19 crisis has made broadband access even more critical to New Mexico's hardworking families,” sponsor Rep. Joy Garratt, D-Albuquerque said. “Broadband helps all New Mexicans advance their education, access telemedicine, participate in remote work, and strengthen social ties.”

“To deliver high-speed broadband in the necessary time frame, having a centralized entity like the Office of Broadband ensures efficiency in buildout, and also efficiency in supporting our communities to take advantage of broadband's opportunities,” sponsor Rep. Susan Herrera, D-Embudo said.

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“The Connect New Mexico Act helps all New Mexicans,” sponsor Rep. Candie Sweetser, D-Deming added. “Whether it’s for your education, business, job, ranch, or farm. We all need access to the high-speed, affordable, broadband internet necessary for life today.”

“Right now, New Mexicans don’t have the freedom to live, learn, and work as they choose because they lack access to high-speed broadband internet that’s so essential to modern life,” Rep. Christine Chandler, D- Los Alamos, another sponsor of the bill, said.

“The Connect New Mexico Act works to connect every New Mexico community with reliable internet access to help them stay connected and advance their education and business pursuits.”

Already passed through the House are two other pieces of legislation that work in tandem with House Bill 10 to clear the way for statewide broadband internet.

These are House Joint Resolution 9: Public Assistance for Infrastructure Development, and House Bill 141: Education Infrastructure Technology Definition.

Together, these three measures will allow a new Office of Broadband to apply for grants to help build the state’s broadband infrastructure.

***Members of the public can track legislation on the [New Mexico Legislature website](#), access committee meetings and House floor sessions via the [Webcasts tab](#), or participate by Zoom to provide public comment on committee hearings. During the 2021 Legislative Session, the House of Representatives is focused on passing critical legislation while protecting the health and safety of the public, the staff, and the legislators.***

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