

Senate passes two bills to expand job opportunities; increase internet speed

Written by gallupsun

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SANTA FE – Today, the Senate overwhelmingly approved two measures aimed at creating jobs and opportunities through increased broadband access and increased internet speed across the state.

Currently, New Mexico internet connection speed ranks 48th in the nation and is similar to the average connection speed of Iraq and Moldova. According to Federal Communication Commission study, even a 7 percent increase in broadband adoption could create an estimated 15,000 jobs to New Mexico.

Senate Bill 24 sponsored by Senator Michael Padilla, which passed the Senate by a vote of 37-2, would streamline current statute to facilitate local government investment in broadband infrastructure.

“As long as internet speed across New Mexico trail the rest of the nation, we will continue to miss out on high-paying jobs for our state,” said Senator Michael Padilla. “Helping local governments provide their communities with the connectivity needed to compete must continue to be a priority.”

Senate Bill 338 sponsored by Senator Daniel Ivey-Soto and Representative Jim Smith, which passed the Senate by a vote of 32-1, would create a statewide broadband network and make it

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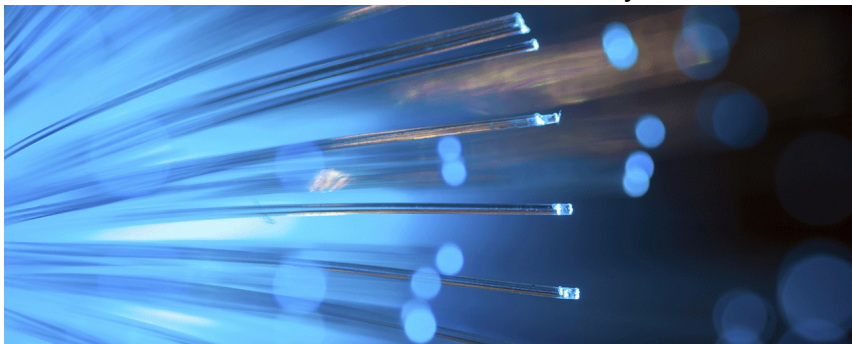
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more attractive for providers to invest in broadband infrastructure by combining demand for internet access among public and educational institutions. Lack of demand is the biggest inhibitor to broadband investment in underserved and rural communities across New Mexico.

“Today’s bipartisan passage signals an understanding that broadband access is a critical component to New Mexico’s economic success,” said Senator Daniel Ivey-Soto. “By creating a blueprint for how we can connect every New Mexican to high-speed internet we will be making a huge investment in our future.”

“Investing in our state’s broadband infrastructure is an important step toward ensuring our state’s economic recovery,” said Representative Jim Smith. “Taking these simple steps will help attract investment to underserved communities.”

Both Senate Bill 24 and Senate Bill 338 will now be considered by the House of Representatives. *By*



Victor Reyes, NMSD