

By: Keffer of Eastland

H.B. No. 3325

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation and administration of the community telecommunications alliance program.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 487, Government Code, is amended by adding Subchapter K to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER K. COMMUNITY TELECOMMUNICATIONS ALLIANCE PROGRAM

Sec. 487.451. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Community telecommunications alliance" means an association of public and private entities created to share resources, promote innovative school health technology, promote economic development opportunities for the community, and improve the overall quality of life within a local community.

(2) "Program" means the community telecommunications alliance program.

Sec. 487.452. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (a) The office and the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund Board by rule shall adopt a memorandum of understanding establishing the community telecommunications alliance program. The program shall:

(1) assist local communities in the creation and development of community telecommunications alliances;

(2) assist community telecommunications alliances in applying for grant funding for projects, including:

(A) assisting alliances in securing matching

1 private sector funding for projects; and

2 (B) requiring alliances to develop sustainable
3 plans:

4 (i) that demonstrate how the alliance will
5 continue services once the grant funding terminates; and

6 (ii) that do not adversely affect the
7 financial stability of local businesses and telecommunications
8 providers

9 (3) assist community telecommunications alliances in
10 facilitating access to telecommunications services for local
11 communities to promote rural economic development; and

12 (4) create rural pilot projects to develop innovative
13 school health technology projects.

14 (b) Each community telecommunications alliance established
15 under this section shall have an advisory council with
16 representation from each of the following:

17 (1) a local nonprofit organization;

18 (2) a local county-elected official;

19 (3) a local city-elected official;

20 (4) a local telecommunications provider;

21 (5) a local economic development group; and

22 (6) the local financial community.

23 (c) Eligibility for private network services under this
24 section is limited to the entities listed in Sections 58.253(a) and
25 59.072(a), Utilities Code, as appropriate.

26 (d) A community telecommunications alliance shall make
27 available the opportunity for public and school libraries, public

1 and nonprofit health care facilities, and local institutions of
2 higher education to be included in the community telecommunications
3 alliance.

4 Sec. 487.453. REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE. Not later than
5 January 1 of each odd-numbered year, the office shall submit to the
6 legislature a report detailing the grant activities of the program
7 and grant recipients. The report must include:

8 (1) the criteria used to quantify the effect grant
9 funds had in advancing telecommunications connectivity and
10 technology;

11 (2) data and performance measures used to quantify the
12 achievement of program objectives; and

13 (3) a description of and results from a grant
14 monitoring risk assessment and on-site review process.

15 SECTION 2. Section 57.047(c), Utilities Code, is amended to
16 read as follows:

17 (c) In awarding a grant or loan under this subchapter, the
18 board shall give priority to a project or proposal that:

19 (1) represents collaborative efforts involving more
20 than one school, university, or library;

21 (2) contributes matching funds from another source;

22 (3) shows promise of becoming self-sustaining;

23 (4) helps users of information learn new ways to
24 acquire and use information through telecommunications;

25 (5) extends specific educational information and
26 knowledge services to a group not previously served, especially a
27 group in a rural or remote area;

1 (6) results in more efficient or effective learning
2 than through conventional teaching;

3 (7) improves the effectiveness and efficiency of
4 health care delivery; [~~or~~]

5 (8) takes advantage of distance learning
6 opportunities in a rural or urban school district with a:

7 (A) disproportionate number of at-risk youths;

8 or

9 (B) high dropout rate; or

10 (9) was developed in connection with a community
11 telecommunications alliance program created under Subchapter K,
12 Chapter 487, Government Code.

13 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2003.