

By: Price

H.B. No. 1960

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation of the governor's broadband council.

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

SECTION 1. Subtitle F, Title 4, Government Code, is amended by adding Chapter 490H to read as follows:

CHAPTER 490H. GOVERNOR'S BROADBAND COUNCIL

Sec. 490H.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Broadband" means a service that provides advanced telecommunications capability and Internet access.

(2) "Council" means the governor's broadband council.

Sec. 490H.002. COMPOSITION. (a) The council is composed of the following 15 voting members:

(1) two representatives of unaffiliated Internet service providers, appointed by the governor;

(2) one representative of a nonprofit organization that advocates for elderly persons statewide, appointed by the governor;

(3) two representatives of unaffiliated nonprofit organizations that have a demonstrated history of working with the legislature and the public to identify solutions for expanding broadband to rural and underserved areas of this state, appointed by the governor;

(4) one representative of an agricultural advocacy organization in this state, appointed by the governor;

1 (5) one representative of a hospital advocacy
2 organization in this state, appointed by the governor;

3 (6) one representative of a medical advocacy
4 organization in this state, appointed by the governor;

5 (7) one county official who serves in an elected
6 office of a county with a population of less than 35,000, appointed
7 by the governor;

8 (8) one municipal official who serves in an elected
9 office of a municipality with a population of less than 20,000
10 located in a county with a population of less than 60,000, appointed
11 by the governor;

12 (9) one representative of an institution of higher
13 education who has published scholarly research on broadband,
14 appointed by the governor;

15 (10) two members of the house of representatives,
16 appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives; and

17 (11) two state senators, appointed by the lieutenant
18 governor.

19 (b) A member of the council appointed under Subsection (a)
20 serves for a five-year term.

21 (c) A vacancy on the council is filled in the same manner as
22 the original appointment.

23 Sec. 490H.003. COUNCIL PRESIDING OFFICER AND MEETINGS. The
24 governor shall designate the presiding officer of the council.

25 Sec. 490H.004. MEETINGS. (a) The council shall convene at
26 least once every quarter.

27 (b) The council shall convene at the call of the presiding

1 officer.

2 Sec. 490H.005. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT. The governor's
3 office shall provide administrative support to the council.

4 Sec. 490H.006. DUTIES. The council shall:

5 (1) research the past and present development of
6 broadband in areas that are currently underserved and unserved with
7 broadband;

8 (2) identify barriers to residential and commercial
9 broadband access in this state and to broadband development in this
10 state and study solutions to overcome identified barriers; and

11 (3) analyze how statewide access to broadband would
12 benefit:

13 (A) economic development;

14 (B) the delivery of educational opportunities in
15 higher education and public education;

16 (C) state and local law enforcement;

17 (D) state emergency preparedness; and

18 (E) the delivery of health care services,
19 including telemedicine and telehealth; and

20 (F) any other matter related to the subject of
21 broadband that a majority of the council members deem appropriate
22 to research.

23 Sec. 490H.007. ANNUAL REPORT. Not later than November 1 of
24 each year, beginning in 2020, the council shall prepare and deliver
25 a report in electronic format of its findings and recommendations
26 to the governor, the lieutenant governor, and each member of the
27 legislature.

1 Sec. 490H.008. EXPIRATION. This chapter expires September
2 1, 2029.

3 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
4 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
5 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
6 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
7 Act takes effect September 1, 2019.