

By: Guillen

H.B. No. 2697

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the regulation of the funding resources awarded by the broadband development office.

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

SECTION 1. Section 490I.0103(c), Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(c) This chapter does not grant the comptroller authority to regulate broadband services or broadband service providers or, except as required of an applicant or recipient under Section 490I.0106, to require broadband service providers to:

(1) submit information to the comptroller; or
(2) comply with best practices for broadband development.

SECTION 2. Sections 490I.0106(b) and (h), Government Code, are amended to read as follows:

(b) The office shall establish and publish criteria for making awards under Subsection (a). The office shall:

(1) take into consideration grants and other financial incentives awarded by the federal government for the deployment of broadband service in a designated area;

(2) prioritize the applications of applicants that will expand access to and adoption of broadband service in eligible areas in which the lowest percentage of addresses have access to broadband service; ~~and~~

1 (3) prioritize the applications of applicants that
2 will expand access to broadband service in public and private
3 primary and secondary schools and institutions of higher education;
4 and

5 (4) develop best practices for broadband development
6 and provide the manner in which award recipients must comply with
7 those best practices.

8 (h) The office shall establish and publish criteria for
9 award recipients. The criteria must include requirements that
10 grants, loans, and other financial incentives awarded through the
11 program be used only:

12 (1) for capital expenses, purchase or lease of
13 property, and other expenses, including backhaul and transport,
14 that will facilitate the provision or adoption of broadband
15 service; and

16 (2) in the manner provided by the office for
17 compliance with the best practices for broadband development
18 developed under Subsection (b)(4).

19 SECTION 3. Section [490I.0106](#), Government Code, as amended
20 by this Act, applies only to an application submitted to the
21 broadband development office on or after the date the office
22 publishes the best practices for broadband development as provided
23 by that section.

24 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.