

Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee

Jessica Bourque 271-2104

HB 569, relative to the establishment of county-wide communication districts.

Hearing Date: April 15, 2025

Time Opened: 10:23 a.m.

Time Closed: 10:26 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Gray, Rochefort, Perkins Kwoka and Long

Members of the Committee Absent: Senator Lang

Bill Analysis: This bill allows counties to initiate the establishment of county-wide communications districts.

Sponsors:

Rep. H. Howard
Rep. Wall

Rep. Preece
Sen. Watters

Rep. Coker

Who supports the bill: Rep. Heath Howard, Kate Horgan (NH Association of Counties), Sarah Burke Cohen (NH Municipal Association)

Who opposes the bill: No one

Summary of testimony presented:

Representative Heath Howard, Prime Sponsor, Strafford-District 4

- This bill allows for the establishment of county-wide communications districts.
- This is enabling legislation that streamlines how these districts are established. They were codified back in 2020.
- Essentially, it works by helping low population density areas group together to get a good contract from an internet service provider.
- This is trying to make establishing these districts easier.
- The options are limited for service providers across the state.
- Some areas have multiple, but many only have one.
- Helps expand the ability of the municipalities to compete and get good contracts with the provider.
- Allows county governments to reach out to local municipalities about possibly forming a study committee.

Kate Horgan, NH Association of Counties

- The association supports the bill. Believes this bill is straightforward, enabling legislation, and does not require anyone to do anything.
- Would allow counties to come together with municipalities to determine whether a communication district would be useful.

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Date Hearing Report completed: April 18, 2025