

HB 153 - AS INTRODUCED

2021 SESSION

21-0113

10/11

HOUSE BILL **153**

AN ACT establishing a committee to study universal Internet access for New Hampshire.

SPONSORS: Rep. Oxenham, Sull. 1; Rep. Vail, Hills. 30; Rep. McWilliams, Merr. 27; Rep. Laflamme, Coos 3; Rep. Merner, Coos 7; Sen. Kahn, Dist 10

COMMITTEE: Science, Technology and Energy

ANALYSIS

This bill establishes a committee to study universal Internet access for New Hampshire.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struckthrough.]~~
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty One

AN ACT establishing a committee to study universal Internet access for New Hampshire.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 1 Findings. The day has arrived when ubiquitous high-speed Internet connectivity is an
2 expectation. Particularly during the pandemic, our immediate need for remote meetings and
3 communication, remote learning, telehealth, e-commerce, and rapid transfer and analysis of such
4 things as crash data and other information, has become painfully obvious. Sadly, too many New
5 Hampshire households and establishments lack the infrastructure or the means to acquire
6 connectivity of sufficient quality to achieve equitable participation in the digital world. Many rural
7 areas with low population density have been overlooked by Internet service providers, who
8 nevertheless claim those areas to be served because a few locations have access. Urban regions in
9 New Hampshire report low-income neighborhoods have too few broadband access points to provide
10 adequate service when demand is high, such as during school hours.

11 2 Study Committee Established. There is established a committee to study universal Internet
12 access for New Hampshire.

13 I. The members of the committee shall be as follows:

14 (a) Three members of the house of representatives, each of whom shall be from a
15 standing committee having jurisdiction over an issue related to Internet access and infrastructure,
16 appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives.

17 (b) Two members of the senate, appointed by the president of the senate.

18 II. In addition, the legislative members of committee shall seek input and expert advice from
19 each of the following:

20 (a) Representatives of the state's regional planning boards;

21 (b) A broadband development expert;

22 (c) A representative of the National Collaborative for Digital Equity;

23 (d) A grant writer;

24 (e) Internet Service Provider (ISP) industry representatives;

25 (f) A representative from the university of New Hampshire with relevant expertise;

26 (g) A representative of the office of strategic initiatives; and

27 (h) Representatives from the New Hampshire department of health and human services
28 and the New Hampshire department of education.

29 III. Legislative members of the committee shall receive mileage at the legislative rate when
30 attending to the duties of the committee.

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1 IV. The committee shall study universal Internet access for New Hampshire. The
2 committee shall analyze the recent legislative changes that allow towns and cities to create
3 communication districts and allow bonding for municipalities to finance such infrastructure, and
4 shall examine the upcoming report from the commission to study the health effects of emerging 5G
5 technology, as well as additional avenues that may be deemed necessary to achieve the committee's
6 goal.

7 V. The members of the study committee shall elect a chairperson from among the members.
8 The first meeting of the committee shall be called by the first-named house member. The first
9 meeting of the committee shall be held within 45 days of the effective date of this section. Three
10 members of the committee shall constitute a quorum.

11 VI. The committee shall report its findings and any recommendations for proposed
12 legislation to the speaker of the house of representatives, the president of the senate, the house
13 clerk, the senate clerk, the governor, and the state library on or before November 1, 2021.

14 3 Effective Date. This act shall take effect upon its passage.