

Amendment: TR3

Representative **ERICKSON** proposes the following amendment:

SECTION 73 - RO60 OFFICE OF REGULATORY STAFF

New

73.obc. (Office of Broadband Coordinator) (A) From funds appropriated for this purpose, there is established the Office of Broadband Coordinator within the Office of Regulatory Staff to serve as the central broadband planning body for the State and to coordinate with federal, state, regional, local, and private entities, to the extent practicable, to encourage the continued development of access to broadband in the State.

(B) The Office of Broadband Coordinator shall convene a collaborative stakeholder process to identify challenges to expediting broadband access and shall provide a report to the General Assembly with recommendations for which legislative, regulatory, or other governmental actions are appropriate to promote broadband access throughout the State.

(C) Funds appropriated to the Office of Broadband Coordinator for broadband infrastructure shall be used to continue to fund the Broadband Infrastructure Program, including the completion of those broadband infrastructure projects that were approved for funding pursuant to Act 142 of 2020 but not constructed by December of 2020. Expansion of broadband infrastructure shall emphasize services to rural communities and communities with a lack of access to broadband. The Office of Broadband Coordinator shall prioritize infrastructure expansion that will make high-speed broadband available to homes, businesses, schools, health care facilities, and other institutions in unserved areas across South Carolina.

(D) The Office of Broadband Coordinator shall serve as a central resource to collect and publish information regarding federal and state programs to fund broadband expansion, and to the extent practicable, coordinate resources such that both state and federal resources are efficiently maximized.

(E) The Office of Broadband Coordinator may use assistance from state and federal agencies or from private organizations and industry to accomplish the purposes of this provision. Unexpended funds at the end of the prior fiscal year shall be carried forward and expended in the current fiscal year by the Office of Regulatory Staff for the same purposes.