

Subject Broadband Internet

Authors Pursell and Others

Analyst Colbey Sullivan

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Overview

As amended by the H2313DE1 amendment, this bill would: make permanent the Lower Population Density Pilot Grant Program established by the legislature in 2022 and administered by the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED); double the maximum award per project under DEED's Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program; and allocate the following amounts from the state general fund: \$216 million for the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program and \$60 million for the Lower Population Density Grant Program.

Summary

Section	Description
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1	Limitation.
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Doubles the maximum award per project under DEED's Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program from \$5 million to \$10 million. Combined with section 2, this section also authorizes DEED to award up to \$10 million per project under the permanent Lower Population Density Grant Program.

2	Lower population density grant program.
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Establishes a permanent program that, like the 2022 pilot program, would be administered by DEED. Also like the pilot program, the permanent program would fund up to 75 percent of a project's total cost in unserved and underserved areas of the state where a 50 percent state share is not adequate to make a business case for the extension of broadband facilities. Under current law and this bill, unserved areas are those where households or businesses lack access to wire-line broadband service; underserved areas are those where households or businesses lack access to wire-line broadband service at speeds of at least 100 mbps download and at least 20 mbps upload.

Section	Description
3	Expenditures. Authorizes DEED to use money in the existing border-to-border broadband fund account for the permanent Lower Population Density Grant Program.
4	Lower population density pilot program. Sunsets the 2022 Lower Population Density Pilot Program effective December 31, 2026.
5	Broadband grants; transfers. Allocates a onetime amount of \$216 million from the general fund to the border-to-border broadband fund account for purposes of the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program. Similarly allocates \$60 million onetime for purposes of the permanent Lower Population Density Grant Program.



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