



CONNECT new mexico

Office of Broadband Access & Expansion

PRESS RELEASE

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HB 160, a bipartisan effort unanimously passed the House and Senate during the 2023 legislative session. The legislation amends state statute and gives the State Transportation Commission discretion to waive Rights of Way (ROW) fees for installation of infrastructure for the public good. Previously, NMDOT was constitutionally prohibited from allowing private businesses to use public ROW for less than fair market value

The bill will allow NMDOT to maintain its managerial role over state roads and highways with additional authority to collaboratively provide private businesses access to the public ROW for broadband deployment to provide broadband services to unserved or underserved locations as defined in the Connect New Mexico Act. The legislation also removes obstacles for smaller Internet Service Providers.

Commented Director Kelly Schlegel, “In the several months since my appointment, it’s become clear that the key to making universal broadband a reality in New Mexico is by breaking down some of the systemic barriers that exist in the form of complicated Rights of Way processes. We are exceedingly grateful to Governor Lujan Grisham and the legislators who spearheaded this legislation, which gives us the tools to overcome some of these challenges.”

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