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Office of Broadband Access & Expansion

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Broadband Affordability Bill Heads to Governor's Desk

SANTA FE – A broadband affordability bill designed to help as many as 27,000 low-income New Mexicans receive high-speed internet is now on its way to the governor's desk.

The New Mexico House late last night passed Senate Bill (SB) 152, which would establish the Low-Income Telecommunications Assistance Program (LITAP). The House vote was 48-14.

SB 152 authorizes $10 million in broadband funding to help low-income families afford broadband service. The funding would come from the State Rural Universal Service Fund, administered by the Public Regulation Commission which has $40 million specifically earmarked for broadband programs by statute.

"We are very grateful that the Legislature has taken action to ensure broadband affordability and approved SB 152," said **Jeff Lopez**, director of the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE). "Delivering broadband infrastructure across the state remains an essential part of our mission, and now it's imperative that New Mexico families are able to afford it. High-speed internet is critical for New Mexicans to succeed, and income should not prevent them from getting access to this vital infrastructure."

"With the passage of Senate Bill 152, New Mexico is taking bold, historic steps to make high-speed internet truly accessible for all," said **Sen. Majority Whip Michael Padilla**, who introduced the bill. "These decisions expand broadband infrastructure into every corner of our state and ensure affordability for families who have long been left behind. By investing in reliable, high-speed broadband, we're unlocking economic opportunity, closing the digital divide, and connecting communities so every New Mexican can thrive."

"It is important that every person has access to good communication without regard to income, zip code, or status," said **Rep. Pamelya Herndon**, (D-28), who led the bill in the House. "Senate Bill 152 will make sure that communication access is available to every family in New Mexico."

The legislation specifies that after the first year up to $45 million may be authorized to provide broadband subsidies. That could mean more than 100,000 low-income families would receive broadband assistance.

Three legislative committees and the full Senate had all unanimously approved SB 152 before the legislation reached the House floor.

Director Lopez and Sen. Padilla testified during hearings in support of the bill. The New Mexico Exchange Carrier Group, which represents 10 telecommunications providers in rural communities, the Center for Civic Policy, and the New Mexico AARP were among the many supporters of the legislation.

SB 152 was also cosponsored by Rep. Debra Sariñana (D-21). It was prepared by OBAE in consultation with the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission.

The bill now goes to Governor Lujan Grisham for signature.

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The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion is dedicated to serving New Mexico with a commitment to make high-speed broadband accessible to all New Mexicans. OBAE's mission is to expand and improve high-speed internet service with passionate leadership that drives bold, equitable, affordable and inclusive broadband solutions. OBAE seeks results that honor the state's rich heritage and elevate quality of life for all.

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