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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Roundhouse Revenue Request: State Broadband Office Calls on Legislative Committee for \$70 Million to Expand Satellite Service**

**SANTA FE**—This afternoon, the Acting Director of the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) went before the Legislative Finance Committee to request \$70 million to increase satellite connections in the state.

Drew Lovelace testified before state lawmakers that these nonrecurring funds would go toward a proposed initiative called *Accelerate Connect NM*, which would subsidize the cost of connecting to satellite high-speed internet service for qualifying unserved or underserved households.

Lovelace explained to committee members that under *Accelerate Connect NM*, nearly 100,000 New Mexicans would get access to broadband--particularly in rural and hard-to-reach parts of the state--while waiting for more reliable broadband technologies to be deployed. These locations are in areas eligible for satellite service, yet they meet the definition of “unserved” or “underserved.” “Unserved” locations receive 25mbps download and 3mbps upload speeds or less, while “underserved” receive between 25mbps/3mbps and 100mbps download and 20mbps upload.

“This funding request reflects the short-term needs for connectivity and affordability, while advancing dozens of projects that will deliver on the long-term needs of the state,” said **Lovelace**. “All of New Mexico should have high-speed internet. *Accelerate Connect NM* will be vital to achieving inclusivity for rural homes and businesses. This program ensures New Mexicans are not on the wrong side of the digital divide for the next few years while longer term projects are built.”

Lovelace told legislators that *Accelerate Connect NM* would bridge the accessibility gap for tens of thousands of New Mexicans while multi-year broadband infrastructure, such as fiber, is being built out across the state. Lovelace testified that while fiber is considered the gold standard of broadband, it can take years to build due to such setbacks as federal government regulations, rights of way, permitting, costs to attach fiber to utility poles and problems with route interference like gas and water lines.

The \$70 million for *Accelerate Connect NM* would support the following investments during state fiscal years 2026 and 2027:

- Up to 95,000 household vouchers for necessary hardware.
- Monthly subsidy for low-income households to make their satellite service bill more affordable.

OBAE's current FY '25 operating budget is \$2,388,700. The agency is asking for an increase of \$650,000 in FY '26.

Most of the budget increase will go to paying the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) for administrative support to align with the growth of OBAE's staff, programs and projects. OBAE currently manages approximately \$1 billion of state and federal funding and is administratively attached to DoIT.

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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.*