

# TELECOMMUNICATIONS, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY

Resolution TST-21-28

## A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF USING EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT BROADBAND

WHEREAS, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators is committed to ensuring all residents have access to affordable, fast, and reliable internet to be competitive in society and bridge the digital divide;

WHEREAS, access to broadband internet service has increasingly become a necessity to work and learn from home;

WHEREAS, broadband service is not broadly available in rural areas and low-income communities;

WHEREAS, broadband service is not available in rural areas due to the high cost of building the necessary infrastructure, particularly critical fiberoptic cables, across sparsely populated areas of the country that do not have a high population density;

WHEREAS, electric utilities are expanding their own fiber networks to support investments in advanced energy infrastructure to help provide cleaner, more reliable, and more resilient electricity to customers;

WHEREAS, electric utilities that build fiber networks for grid operations can leverage these networks to help solve broadband service challenges efficiently and economically, thereby reducing costs for customers particularly when they increase competition;

WHEREAS, with the support of federal, state and local governments, electric utilities cost-effectively could increase the capacity of their fiber networks to accommodate broadband expansion by installing broadband fiber on existing transmission infrastructure, through existing rights of way;

WHEREAS, investor-owned electric companies do not intend to provide telecom services to retail customers themselves; and

WHEREAS, electric utilities are uniquely qualified to help expand broadband access to millions of Americans given their existing infrastructure, history and experience electrifying the country for more than a century.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) encourages utilities to deploy reliable cyber-secure broadband to support new technologies and smarter energy infrastructure for the modern electric grid;

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL encourages utilities and public utility commissions to use electric infrastructure to assist in the deployment of broadband services to homes and businesses;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL believes that when utility companies are improving and building out their infrastructure that companies owned by people of color and other disadvantaged businesses should be included in this work particularly in work conducted in communities of color;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL also believes that where possible that we should require new commercial buildings and residential developments to require that they be equipped with broadband;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and other federal and state government officials and agencies as appropriate.

**SPONSOR: Representative Billy Mitchell (GA)**

**Committee of Jurisdiction: Telecommunications, Science, and Technology Policy Committee**

**Certified by Committee Co-Chairs: Representative K.C Ohaebosim (KS) and Senator Audrey Gibson (FL)**

**Ratified in Plenary Session: Ratification Date is December 3, 2020**

**Ratification is certified by: Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter (SC), President**