
Wisconsin Legislative Council

AMENDMENT MEMO



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2021 Assembly Bill 573

Assembly Amendment 1

2021 ASSEMBLY BILL 573

2021 Assembly Bill 573 directs the Public Service Commission (PSC) to award grants for constructing infrastructure for providing wireless broadband and cellular service. The bill also directs the Governor to allocate \$70,000,000 in funds received under the federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) for awarding these grants.

In awarding grants under the bill, the PSC must prioritize projects that expand wireless broadband and cellular service in areas that the Federal Communications Commission defines as unserved or underserved. Additionally, the PSC must ensure that each project funded by a grant provides reliable wireless broadband and cellular service to each site, both within a project area and within a county where a project is located, on a state trunk highway or interstate highway that the Department of Transportation determines has an annual average daily traffic volume of more than 500 vehicles.

Under the bill, the PSC may not award a grant to a project unless the project includes a 20-percent match from the grant recipient. Additionally, the bill prohibits the PSC from awarding a grant after October 1, 2024. Funds allocated under the bill that are not spent by this date must be distributed to municipalities for making technological investments.

In addition to requiring the PSC to award grants, the bill requires each provider of fixed, mass market broadband service to disclose to the PSC, biannually, the properties it serves and the type of technology it uses to provide the service. This data must be provided in a format consistent with and based on the mapping requirements established under the federal Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technological Availability Act. Using this information, the PSC must establish and maintain a publicly accessible map of broadband availability and may contract with a private vendor to undertake these activities. Under the bill, the map must be updated at least twice each year and must display the availability of broadband service for each type of technology used to provide broadband service.

Finally, the bill directs the Governor to allocate \$5,000,000 in ARPA funds for establishing and maintaining the broadband map.

ASSEMBLY AMENDMENT 1

Assembly Amendment 1 provides that information furnished by broadband providers for the purposes of the bill's broadband map must be considered confidential. The information may be compiled or published only for the purposes of establishing and maintaining the map. Additionally, if the PSC contracts with a private vendor to establish and maintain the map, the information disclosed by the PSC to the vendor would be subject to the same or similar rules of confidentiality.

BILL HISTORY

Assembly Amendment 1 was offered by Representative Steffen on January 28, 2022. On February 3, 2022, the Assembly Committee on Energy and Utilities recommended adoption of the amendment on a vote of Ayes, 10; Noes, 5. The bill was then recommended for passage, as amended, on a vote of Ayes, 10; Noes, 5.

BK:jal