



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daniel G. Stec

## Broadband access study advancing in budget negotiation

DANIEL G. STEC March 16, 2021

| ISSUE: **BROADBAND GAP, COMPREHENSIVE BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY ACT**



Legislation that would require the New York State Public Service Commission (PSC) to undertake a comprehensive, statewide review of high-speed broadband availability is advancing in this year's budget negotiation, according to Senator Dan Stec.

Stec was a cosponsor of legislation the Legislature approved last year to require a detailed broadband analysis by the PSC. Though the legislation was approved with overwhelming support in the Senate and Assembly last July, it wasn't until late January that Governor Andrew Cuomo vetoed the measure.

“The veto was a disappointment, especially after we waited so many months for the executive to take action,” said Stec. “The governor’s office had promised they would do something in the budget but that didn’t happen. So, lawmakers are now taking action by proposing to include the legislation in the new state budget, which is due April 1.”

The Comprehensive Broadband Connectivity Act has been incorporated into both the Senate’s and Assembly’s one-house budget proposals. If approved, the PSC would be directed to produce a detailed access map on its website indicating internet service by location and host at least four public hearings to engage the public and Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in helping address broadband gaps.

“The governor’s promise of high-speed Internet for all hasn’t been fulfilled,” said Stec. “The COVID crisis made it glaringly obvious how great a disadvantage not having broadband is and fixing this problem should be a priority for our state.”

Stec added that he has spoken with the Chair of the Senate’s Energy and Telecommunications Committee, Senator Kevin Parker, about other ways to encourage broadband deployment including eliminating a Department of Transportation fee on fiber optic line installers who build lines in state-controlled highway right-of-ways.