



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Sean M. Ryan

Senator Sean Ryan Announces State Budget Includes Major Broadband Funding, Labor Standards For Broadband Projects

SEAN M. RYAN April 8, 2022

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SENATOR SEAN RYAN ANNOUNCES STATE BUDGET INCLUDES MAJOR BROADBAND FUNDING, LABOR STANDARDS FOR BROADBAND PROJECTS

‘WIRED Broadband Act’ Will Expand Deployment of High-Speed Internet and Increase Access to Affordable Broadband Statewide – Budget Also Repeals Fiber Optic Right-of-Way Fee

ALBANY – Today, April 8, 2022, New York State Senator Sean Ryan announced that the state budget for FY 2022-2023 appropriates \$300 million of state funds to be added to \$1.15 billion in federal funds, creating a historic \$1.45 billion investment in broadband-related projects in New York. The budget also includes the *Working to Implement Reliable and Equitable Deployment of (WIRED) Broadband Act*.

The WIRED Broadband Act, which Senator Ryan championed, is a comprehensive plan to utilize federal and state funding in a manner that is efficient and transparent. In order to do so, it establishes a Division of Broadband Development that will work with state agencies to address gaps in broadband access and develop a long-term investment plan. The work of the division will be guided by a newly created Advisory Council on Broadband Development. Its members will include a representative of a telecommunications union, an individual with substantial expertise in tribal affairs, and two members with substantial expertise in telecommunications policy and broadband development.

The WIRED Broadband Act will provide greater accountability and codify New York's broadband grant programs into statute. It contains comprehensive prevailing wage language, establishes labor reporting requirements, and sets preference for high labor standards and compliance when awarding grants.

The new programs include:

- **ConnectAll Deployment Program:** A continuation of the New NY Broadband grant program, which provides grants for deployment of fiber optic lines in underserved and unserved areas.
- **ConnectAll Municipal Assistance Program:** Provides support for municipalities and grants for broadband projects where localities identify immediate need.
- **ConnectAll Innovation Grants Program:** Provides competitive grants to develop and commercialize innovative and new broadband solutions and technologies.
- **ConnectAll Digital Equity Grant Program:** Provides grants to support individuals to have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in society and the economy, including the effective implementation of a State Digital Equity Plan.

The budget also repeals New York's right-of-way permit fee for fiber deployment. The fee, which was instituted as part of the 2019 state budget, is charged by the New York State Department of Transportation to companies that install fiber optic cable lines in a state highway right-of-way. Proponents of its repeal have argued that the fee makes expansion into rural areas cost prohibitive for

broadband providers, hindering smaller providers in particular. Eliminating the fee removes one barrier to universal broadband in New York and encourages providers to expand service into regions that are currently underserved.

Senator Sean Ryan said, “Over the years, New York has spent a lot of money on broadband without much to show for it. Now, we have a chance to get it right. With this unprecedented investment in broadband deployment, New Yorkers in every corner of the state will soon be guaranteed access to good, consistent high-speed internet. Even better, the passage of the WIRED Broadband Act will ensure that this transformational broadband rollout creates good-paying jobs.”

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