



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jen Metzger

## Senator Metzger Announces \$425K State Grant for Sullivan County's Wireless Broadband Project

JEN METZGER October 28, 2020

| ISSUE: **BROADBAND ACCESS, COMPREHENSIVE BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY ACT, SULLIVAN COUNTY**



**Sullivan County, NY...** Senator Jen Metzger (SD-42) today announced a \$425,000 State and Municipal Facilities Capital (SAM) grant awarded to Sullivan County's wireless broadband project to address unmet and increasingly vital telecommunications needs through the development of a countywide wireless broadband network. The project includes mounting communications equipment on newly constructed and existing towers to establish and

increase signal reach for LTE wireless broadband transmission. The grant funding secured by Senator Metzger will cover the construction of a new communication tower at the Health and Human Services Complex in the Town of Liberty, enabling coverage to more than 1,700 households in the Town and neighboring communities and serving as a critical node in Sullivan's countywide project. Equipment installation for the County's wireless broadband network pilot in Monticello is currently underway.

"Long before COVID-19, lack of access to high-speed internet has limited economic and educational opportunities in our region. The pandemic has only magnified the disadvantages of being without internet when it comes to school, work, healthcare, and daily living," **said Senator Jen Metzger.** "I'm thrilled to partner with Sullivan County in expanding municipal broadband service, and will continue to work to fully close the gaps in service and affordability. At the state level, we need the Governor to sign my Comprehensive Broadband Connectivity Act, which passed the State Legislature with wide bipartisan support in July."

Once additional grant funding is secured, a total of 13 towers will have the capacity to broadcast coverage to nearly 65 percent of the County's residential population.

"Broadband is no longer a luxury but a necessity in Sullivan County, and the County Legislature decided action is required now," **said Sullivan County Manager Joshua A. Potosek.** "We aren't waiting for the economics to become palatable to private industry, and I'd like to thank Senator Metzger for facilitating the funding for this much-needed project."

"I truly believe this project has the potential to transform Sullivan County, similar to how telephone and electric service transformed our region a century ago," **remarked Lorne Green, commissioner of Sullivan County's Information Technology Services and progenitor of this pilot project.** "With Senator Metzger's support and the Legislature's commitment, we are close to debuting an incredible new service that promises to make a meaningful difference in many

lives.”

In July, Metzger's broadband legislation [S8805](#) recognizing access to high-speed internet as a right of all New Yorkers and essential to economic and social well-being and public safety passed the Senate nearly unanimously. The bill (formerly S5696A) directs the Public Service Commission (PSC) to study the availability, affordability, and reliability of high-speed internet and broadband access in New York State and produce a detailed access map on its website that indicates internet service by location. The legislation also requires the PSC to hold a minimum of four regional public hearings across the State and submit a report on its findings to the Governor and legislature within one year to prioritize broadband access for communities that have experienced negative economic and social impacts due to absent or insufficient service.

*Jen Metzger represents the 42nd Senate District, which includes all of Sullivan County and parts of Delaware, Orange, and Ulster Counties. Senator Metzger serves as Chair of the Agriculture Committee and sits on the Environmental Conservation, Education, Health, Energy and Telecommunications, Local Government, Women’s Issues, Domestic Animal Welfare, and Legislative Commission on Rural Resources Committees.*

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2019-S8805**

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- Introduced

- ○ In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- ○ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- ○ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Vetoed By Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Relates to the public service commission reviewing broadband and fiber optic services within the state

July 17, 2020

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by **Jen Metzger**

Do you support this bill?