



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

## Senator Hinchey Calls on Public Service Commission to Create Offline Process for State's Broadband Mapping Survey to Accommodate New Yorkers Without Internet

MICHELLE HINCHEY November 23, 2021

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ALBANY, NY – State Senator Michelle Hinchey (SD-46) is urging the Public Service Commission (PSC) to expand its data collection methods for the Broadband Assessment Program, which aims — through an online-only process — to retrieve household-level survey data from New Yorkers about their internet access to help inform future build-out in unserved and underserved areas. [In a letter sent to Commissioners on Monday](#), Hinchey

requested that the PSC create offline modes through which New Yorkers without internet can complete the broadband survey, including a printable survey that can be returned by mail and a hotline for those who wish to complete the survey by phone.

The creation of the PSC's recently launched [Broadband Assessment Program](#) was mandated by legislation co-sponsored by Senator Hinchey, which passed as part of the 2021 Enacted State Budget. The Comprehensive Broadband Connectivity Act is meant to correct faulty FCC maps, which are based on census tracts, to determine which New York State neighborhoods have broadband coverage, by charging the PSC to undertake a statewide assessment that delivers granular, household-level data.

“The PSC’s online-only process for data collection runs completely antithetical to its goal, which is to get everyone across New York State connected to the internet. Right now, this survey excludes the very people it’s tasked with helping — New Yorkers without the internet,” **said Senator Michelle Hinchey**. “High-speed broadband is a necessity and if the PSC doesn’t expand its data collection efforts to include offline opportunities for people who lack internet access, these New Yorkers will continue to be left behind, perpetuating another decade of incomplete broadband coverage data. Implementing methods as simple as a hotline or a printable survey would greatly increase accessibility. Accurate household-level information is critical to help us pinpoint the gaps in service and quality so that we know where to direct future build-out. On behalf of every New Yorker who is currently on the wrong side of the digital divide, I urge the PSC to heed our call.”

Hinchey’s letter, which is endorsed by 42 State Senators, also calls on the PSC to arrange in-person listening sessions in communities across the state that currently lack high-speed internet. “Providing these forums where PSC staff can listen to residents’ issues and

complete the survey in person will allow for better information gathering and overall better strategic outcomes,” **said Senator Hinchey.**

**A full copy of the bipartisan-backed letter sent on Monday, November 22, is attached.**

*Senator Michelle Hinchey represents the 46th Senate District, which includes Greene and Montgomery Counties and parts of Albany, Schenectady, and Ulster Counties. Senator Hinchey serves as Chair of the Agriculture Committee and sits on the Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, Commerce, Economic Development and Small Business, Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation, Energy and Telecommunications, Environmental Conservation, and Local Government Committees.*

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