



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

Governor Signs Bill by Senator Hinchey and Assemblymember Woerner to Expand Rural Broadband Service

MICHELLE HINCHEY January 10, 2022

| ISSUE: **BROADBAND**



ALBANY, NY – State Senator Michelle Hinchey (SD-46) and Assemblymember Carrie Woerner (AD-113) today announced that their bill to help bridge the digital divide in rural and underserved areas has been signed into law by Governor Kathy Hochul. The legislation, [S7028/A2396A](#), will make it easier and more affordable for broadband providers to install internet service on utility poles by mandating the fair distribution of installation costs between service providers and utility corporations and streamlining the contract process for broadband expansion projects.

When broadband providers try to install new internet service lines on utility poles they are often hit with exorbitant costs, including requests to fund the replacement of the entire pole, which can increase project costs several times higher than budgeted, resulting in significant project delays, and disincentivizing providers from expanding

coverage in rural communities altogether.

The Hinchey/Woerner legislation clarifies that pole owners currently collecting a fee from ratepayers for utility pole replacements cannot shift the cost burden to broadband service providers and, instead, must divide the expenditure in a fair and equitable manner. In addition to reducing costs, the measure simplifies pole contracting for providers and municipalities by placing all utility poles in a given city, town, or village under one contract, thereby creating a more efficient system for providers to expand broadband service. Regulations previously required broadband providers to obtain contracts for each utility pole they intended to use.

“Every day in my district, I see firsthand how communities without 21st-century broadband infrastructure are being left behind. I’ve also seen what it looks like when a rural neighborhood finally gets connected to reliable broadband service and how that single act can change the course of a community’s future,” **said Senator Michelle Hinchey.** “This legislation removes two of the most common cost and efficiency barriers that broadband service providers face when trying to bring internet to rural homes and businesses — a commonsense solution that will expand broadband access in communities that need it the most. Access to the internet is a fundamental necessity, and I won’t stop fighting until every home and business in New York State is fully connected. I thank Governor Hochul for signing this legislation and Assemblymember Woerner for her partnership.”

Assemblymember Carrie Woerner said, “This legislation will require utility pole owners to pay their fair share of construction costs rather than shifting the entire cost to broadband companies seeking to expedite the expansion of broadband into rural and underserved areas. This change will enable broadband providers to bring service to entire communities within a single project. Allowing these companies to maximize cost-efficiencies and accelerate the pace of expansion will move us closer to the goal of enabling all New Yorkers to access high-speed internet and the digital economy.”

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RELATED LEGISLATION

2021-S7028

- Introduced

- ○ In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate

- ○ On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ○ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Relates to requirements for certain contracts for attachments to utility poles and the use of utility ducts, trenches and conduits

May 25, 2021

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by **Michelle Hinchey**

Do you support this bill?