

Chapter 177

(House Bill 243)

AN ACT concerning

**Task Force on Rural Internet, Broadband, Wireless, and Cellular Service –
Study and Extension**

FOR the purpose of requiring the Task Force on Rural Internet, Broadband, Wireless, and Cellular Service, in conducting a certain study, to solicit input from certain entities; expanding the scope of a certain study; extending the date by which the Task Force must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly; extending the termination date of the Task Force; and generally relating to the Task Force on Rural Internet, Broadband, Wireless, and Cellular Service.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Chapter 620 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2017
Section 1(f) and (g) and 2

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Chapter 621 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2017
Section 1(f) and (g) and 2

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Chapter 620 of the Acts of 2017

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That:

(f) (1) (I) The Task Force shall study and make recommendations regarding how ~~Western Maryland counties, Southern Maryland counties, Eastern Shore counties, and Frederick, Carroll, and Harford counties~~ can work together to obtain federal assistance to improve Internet, Broadband, wireless, and cellular services and accessibility in ~~Western Maryland, in Southern Maryland, on the Eastern Shore, and in Frederick, Carroll, and Harford counties~~ RURAL AREAS OF MARYLAND.

(II) IN CONDUCTING THE STUDY REQUIRED UNDER SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH, THE TASK FORCE SHALL SOLICIT INPUT FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ~~AND, INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS, AND WIRELESS SERVICE PROVIDERS~~ ON IDENTIFYING UNSERVED AND UNDERSERVED RURAL AREAS IN WESTERN OF MARYLAND COUNTIES, SOUTHERN MARYLAND COUNTIES, EASTERN SHORE COUNTIES, AND FREDERICK, CARROLL, AND HARFORD COUNTIES.

(2) In accordance with paragraph (3) of this subsection, the study required under paragraph (1) of this subsection shall:

(i) assess current Internet, Broadband, wireless, cellular, and landline service connectivity;

(ii) assess coverage for the users located at the end of the:

1. Internet service connectivity;
2. Broadband service connectivity;
3. wireless service connectivity;
4. cellular service connectivity; and
5. landline service connectivity;

(iii) evaluate redundancies and gaps in the current Internet, Broadband, wireless, cellular, and landline service connectivity; [and]

(iv) evaluate any federal funds applied for in response to any previous Broadband task force in the State; AND

(V) EXAMINE HOW TO ACCESS MAPS SUFFICIENT TO:

1. EDUCATE THE PUBLIC; AND

2. CALCULATE COSTS FOR UNIVERSAL LAST-MILE BROADBAND COVERAGE.

(3) The study required under paragraph (1) of this subsection shall be based on publicly available and nonconfidential information.

(g) On or before November 30, [2017] **2018**, the Task Force shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2–1246 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June 1, 2017. It shall remain effective for a period of [1 year] **2 YEARS** and, at the end of May 31, [2018] **2019**, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That:

(f) (1) **(I)** The Task Force shall study and make recommendations regarding how ~~Western Maryland counties, Southern Maryland counties, Eastern Shore counties, and Frederick, Carroll, and Harford counties~~ can work together to obtain federal assistance to improve Internet, Broadband, wireless, and cellular services and accessibility in ~~Western Maryland, in Southern Maryland, on the Eastern Shore, and in Frederick, Carroll, and Harford counties~~ RURAL AREAS OF MARYLAND.

(II) IN CONDUCTING THE STUDY REQUIRED UNDER SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH, THE TASK FORCE SHALL SOLICIT INPUT FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND, INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS, AND WIRELESS SERVICE PROVIDERS ON IDENTIFYING UNSERVED AND UNDERSERVED RURAL AREAS IN WESTERN OF MARYLAND COUNTIES, SOUTHERN MARYLAND COUNTIES, EASTERN SHORE COUNTIES, AND FREDERICK, CARROLL, AND HARFORD COUNTIES.

(2) In accordance with paragraph (3) of this subsection, the study required under paragraph (1) of this subsection shall:

(i) assess current Internet, Broadband, wireless, cellular, and landline service connectivity;

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(iii) evaluate redundancies and gaps in the current Internet, Broadband, wireless, cellular, and landline service connectivity; [and]

(iv) evaluate any federal funds applied for in response to any previous Broadband task force in the State; **AND**

(V) EXAMINE HOW TO ACCESS MAPS SUFFICIENT TO:

1. EDUCATE THE PUBLIC; AND
2. CALCULATE COSTS FOR UNIVERSAL LAST-MILE BROADBAND COVERAGE.

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Approved by the Governor, April 24, 2018.