

## Rural Broadband

This article is in response to the recent newspaper story titled Rural Areas Are Struggling, which identifies that nearly half of those living in our rural areas lack access to Broadband Internet.

Why is it that some states did not qualify for this money?

### SpaceX Gets \$886 Million From FCC To Subsidize Starlink In 35 States (arstechnica.com)

*SpaceX has been awarded \$885.51 million by the Federal Communications Commission to provide Starlink broadband to 642,925 rural homes and businesses in 35 states. The 35 states where SpaceX won FCC funding are Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming.*

<https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2020/12/spacex-gets-886-million-from-fcc-to-subsidize-starlink-in-35-states/> [arstechnica.com](https://arstechnica.com)

Since the horse had already left the barn on past FCC funding, we don't want to miss out on the next wave of funding. [\\$100 billion for broadband](#) We need to get to work on this right now ahead of the Federal Infrastructure Bill so states do not lose out on Federal monies for Broadband yet again.

Coddling the incumbent monopoly providers who have promised and yet not delivered fiber optic cabling for the past thirty years have proven that the *invisible hand of the free market* does not work here, despite 400 billion dollars of tax subsidies/corporate welfare. See attached.

My previous writings also reveal that these existing incumbent monopolies, i.e. Charter, do not now even deliver the slower speeds which they advertise and charge for.

At 25Mbps you don't get decent Internet because they don't actually deliver that. Frontier just got caught lying about it. Even at 100Mbps, the incumbent providers don't deliver that speed all the way to the Internet. They can only deliver it to an Intranet test site 100 miles or so away. See attached speed test files.

The goal here should be symmetrical 1000Mbps fiber. Not just to selected communities, but nationwide. This has been subsidized and promised for 30 years, but never delivered. You just can't expect different results by doing the same things over and over.

We need to "get with the program" to promote the educational and employment opportunities that rural broadband will bring. If you think about this for a bit, it is not unlike the Great Lakes, Mississippi River ports, the railroad system, the town, county, state, and Interstate highway systems, rural electrification, RFD postal service, and public water and sewer systems of the past. Economic development follows the infrastructure.

Chickens lay eggs. It's a simple history lesson.

The restrictive laws in place banning or restricting municipal and nonprofit Internet providers jeopardizes this funding and I believe, contradicts the pending broadband funding priorities coming from the administration and the FCC.

See more about this problem and a potential solution below.

- [Wisconsin Statute Annotated § 66.0422](#)

Wisconsin state laws allow municipalities to own and operate broadband networks, but such networks can only be paid for by subscribers of the service, not the general population. Municipalities are required to conduct feasibility studies and hold public hearings prior to offering service, allowing telecom incumbents ample opportunity to stall broadband projects. Public entities must include phantom costs in their rates and are not

able to charge rates that are lower than what incumbents charge for the same service. The state laws also prohibit municipalities from subsidizing telecom services.

<https://broadbandnow.com/report/municipal-broadband-roadblocks/>

<https://statescoop.com/report-municipal-broadband-environment-has-gotten-significantly-worse/>

<https://statescoop.com/more-than-20-states-still-restrict-municipal-broadband/>

### **[Washington State Votes To End Restriction On Community Broadband \(vice.com\)](#)**

A report from Motherboard: *Washington State lawmakers have [voted to kill telecom-industry backed restrictions that limit the reach of community broadband](#). The [Public Broadband Act](#) (HB1336) passed the state Senate with a 27-22 vote on Sunday, after passing the House with a vote of 60-37 last February. State Representative Drew Hansen applauded the bill's passage [on Twitter](#), stating it "reverses decades of bad policy" and opens the door to better, cheaper broadband. "Washington was one of only 18 states that restricted local governments from serving the public by providing public broadband," Hansen told Motherboard. "My bill eliminates that restriction."*

*In Washington, [a twenty-one year old law](#) let some local governments build their own broadband networks, but prohibited local utilities from delivering broadband to customers directly. Hansen, who was also the primary sponsor of the state's new net neutrality law, says his bill finally eliminates those unnecessary limits entirely. "The Public Broadband Act broadly authorizes all local governments to provide broadband to anyone -- people who are totally unserved, people who have some internet access but it's not affordable or reliable -- any people at all," Hansen told Motherboard. "Under the Public Broadband Act, Washington governments have completely unrestricted authority to provide broadband to the public."*