

# County urges General Assembly to pass Tennessee Broadband Access Act

[Gary Nelson](#) • 23 hrs ago

The Cumberland County Commission approved a resolution supporting and urging the Tennessee General Assembly pass the Tennessee Broadband Accessibility Act.

Resolution 02-2017-8 states, "Tennessee currently ranks 29th in the U.S. for broadband access and 13 percent of the state lacks access to broadband and 34 percent of the state's rural residents do not have broadband coverage at the recognized minimum standards because of low population density and or geographical constraints."

Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam has proposed the Tennessee Broadband Accessibility Act, which would provide grants and tax credits to encourage deployment of broadband to previously unserved areas.

Sonya Rimmer, 8th District commissioner, sponsored the resolution.

"This is something that's needed. There are a lot of people, like in my district, that don't have a choice. They don't have anything. We need to support this," Rimmer said.

In addition to grants and tax credits, the act would authorize the state's private, nonprofit electric cooperatives to provide broadband throughout their territories and provide grant opportunities for local libraries to provide more digital literacy training for citizens.

The resolution states, "Cumberland County, Tennessee believes the

Tennessee Broadband Accessibility Act provides necessary and reasonable steps to improve broadband access in the state."

John Patterson, 9th District commissioner, said, "About the time I was in seventh grade my parents gave me and my sisters a set of the Encyclopedia Britannica. It was a great educational tool that helped me to later earn National Merit Scholarship recognition and some funds for college. While broadband Internet access is great for emails and eBay, it's today's encyclopedia and it's absolutely essential as an educational tool. Unfortunately, in Tennessee over one third of our students have no broadband internet access..."

Patterson also urged county commissioners to support the resolution to pass the Tennessee Broadband Accessibility Act.

Rimmer made a motion to approve the resolution and urge the passage of the act.

Patterson supported the motion and it was unanimously approved.

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