

2022 SESSION

INTRODUCED

22104552D

SENATE BILL NO. 716

Offered January 21, 2022

A *BILL to direct the Department of Housing and Community Development to develop a plan to address broadband affordability and equity.*

Patron—Petersen

Referred to Committee on General Laws and Technology

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. § 1. *The Department of Housing and Community Development (the Department) shall develop a plan to address broadband affordability and equity. The Commonwealth Digital Affordability and Cost-Effectiveness Plan (the Plan) shall include (i) an overview of where in the Commonwealth broadband and other digital connectivity is unaffordable; (ii) recommendations on how best to leverage federal grants addressing broadband affordability to best execute the Plan; (iii) best practices for establishing a grant program or its equivalent to address digital affordability, taking into account existing federal funds and programs; (iv) a strategy to expand the affordability of broadband by retrofitting all affordable housing projects with broadband installations and other necessary infrastructure improvements; and (v) recommendations, including recommendations for a public outreach plan, on how to take advantage of the \$14 billion Affordability Connectivity Program of the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58) to support a permanent \$30-a-month broadband subsidy for low-income households, National Telecommunications and Information Administration programs, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Reconnect program. The Department shall report the Plan to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 1, 2022.*

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