

MEDA Broadband Committee Meeting

February 22, 2021

2pm

Present: Tracy McIntyre, Chair; Stephen Walter, Allison Corbyn, Bethany Chinadle, Mehmet Casey, Elvis Nuno, Charlotte Lauerman, Steve Simonson, Adam Schafer, Mary Roehr, Russ Fletcher, Anne Boothe, and Gloria O'Rourke.

Bill List Discussion:

HB494: This bill may not appeal to MDOT, but it improves collaboration amongst partners, such as those laying fiber, and prevents digging up a new road. Gloria will place this bill on the MEDA Legislative Committee agenda. This committee supports it and recommends it to MEDA.

SB297: Following a review of the bill and much discussion, the MEDA Broadband Committee will recommend support of this bill with clarification on the layering of funds. Clarification is also needed on line 17 on page 4 and line 20 on page 5. Russ abstained from the vote until he can further investigate if the bill limits competition.

Posted in the chat:

Russ - Montana state laws only allow municipalities to offer broadband services if there are no other private companies offering broadband within the municipality's jurisdiction, or if the municipality can offer "advanced services" that are not available from incumbents. May 13, 2020 Municipal Broadband Is Roadblocked Or Outlawed In 22 States States without municipal broadband restrictions have lower internet prices on average. <https://matr.net/news/municipal-broadband-is-roadblocked-or-outlawed-in-22-states-states-without-municipal-broadband-restrictions-have-lower-internet-prices-on-average/>. Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson Signs Law That Opens the Door for Municipal Broadband Networks <https://matr.net/news/arkansas-gov-asa-hutchinson-signs-law-that-opens-the-door-for-municipal-broadband-networks/>

Mary - broadband service is a defined term, 100/20. unserved=25/3. Mary - broadband service is a defined term 100/20. One should not get public funds to overbuild a GIG-level provider, for instance.

Russ: If enacted, how would this impact this legislation we're discussing today. LC1539 – An Act Allowing Montana Municipalities to Own and Operate Municipal Broadband Systems <https://matr.net/news/lc1539-an-act-allowing-montana-municipalities-to-own-and-operate-municipal-broadband-systems/>

Next steps:

1. This committee's bill language is to be placed in bill format.
2. Tracy will compile a letter of support for SB297 for MEDA's Legislative Committee to review. She will include in the letter needed clarification.
3. Next meeting: March 1st at 2pm.