



State of North Carolina

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

March 14, 2019

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 91

ESTABLISHING THE TASK FORCE ON CONNECTING NORTH CAROLINA, PROMOTING EXPANSION OF ACCESS TO HIGH-SPEED INTERNET AND REMOVING BARRIERS TO BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE INSTALLATION

WHEREAS, broadband infrastructure, which consists of installed telecommunications equipment, networks, and the technology necessary to provide high-speed internet access, has become essential to connect North Carolina's residents, businesses, non-profits, schools, communities, and governments both within and outside the state; and

WHEREAS, deploying broadband infrastructure assets and advanced communication technologies across the state supports continued improvements in critical areas including education, economic development, health care, public safety, and workforce development; and

WHEREAS, state government can facilitate the deployment of broadband infrastructure assets, identify and remove obstacles barring internet service providers ("ISPs") from deploying these assets, and develop programs that remove impediments to the increased adoption and utilization of online services throughout North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina possesses significant state, private, and local resources that can be used to increase the installation of state-of-the-art communication networks across the state and help North Carolina become a national leader in broadband infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to 2015 N.C. Sess. Laws 241, the North Carolina Department of Information Technology's Broadband Infrastructure Office ("the Office") issued a State Broadband Plan (the "Plan") that includes recommendations for expanding broadband access and adoption across the state; and

WHEREAS, the Plan calls for the design and implementation of a Dig Once policy, which is designed to reduce repeated excavations for the installation and maintenance of broadband infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, while progress is being made towards achieving the Plan's goals, additional actions and strategies are necessary to expand broadband access.

NOW, THEREFORE, by the authority vested in me as Governor by the Constitution and the laws of the State of North Carolina, **IT IS ORDERED:**

SECTION 1. **Purpose**

It is the policy of the Office of the Governor and the North Carolina Department of Information Technology (“DIT”) to promote and implement actions that equitably expand broadband access in North Carolina. These actions include: supporting the deployment of last-mile broadband infrastructure; developing a uniform Dig Once policy to reduce repeated broadband installation excavations; bridging the homework gap that results from students not having internet access; and increasing efforts to ensure affordable, high-speed internet for North Carolina residents, businesses, non-profits, schools, communities, and governments. The vast expertise within state cabinet agencies as well as partnerships with non-governmental entities will be utilized to develop and implement strategies toward accomplishing this goal.

SECTION 2. **Establishment**

The Governor’s Task Force on Connecting North Carolina (the “Task Force”) is hereby established.

SECTION 3. **Membership**

- a. The Governor shall appoint all members to the Task Force. The members shall be the following:
 - i. The Secretary of DIT, or designee;
 - ii. The Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, or designee;
 - iii. The Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Commerce, or designee;
 - iv. The Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Administration, or designee;
 - v. The Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, or designee;
 - vi. The Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (“DOT”), or designee;
 - vii. The Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, or designee;
 - viii. The Director of the North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management, or designee.
- b. The Governor may appoint additional members to the Task Force.
- c. All members shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor.
- d. A simple majority of the Task Force shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of transacting business.
- e. The Secretary of DIT, or designee, shall chair the Task Force.

SECTION 4. **Meetings**

The Task Force shall meet when necessary but no less frequently than once a month. The Task Force shall also meet upon the call of the Governor or the Chair.

SECTION 5. **Duties**

The Task Force shall have the following duties:

- a. Prepare and submit a report to the Governor no later than June 1, 2019, that accomplishes the following:
 - i. Assesses the state’s progress in meeting the Plan’s recommendations;
 - ii. Identifies opportunities in the state’s efforts to promote broadband internet connectivity for its residents, businesses, and government institutions;
 - iii. Proposes metrics and standards by which the Governor and DIT Secretary can evaluate the State’s success in achieving its goals under the Plan; and

- iv. Identifies what recommendations for the state should be prioritized and addressed by the end of the 2019 calendar year.
- b. Coordinate efforts to identify and seek federal funding to support the development and installation of broadband infrastructure across North Carolina.
- c. Support North Carolina residents, businesses, and government entities in seeking federal funding to support the development and installation of broadband infrastructure.
- d. Prepare recommendations regarding state processes and procedures that may be streamlined to leverage state property and reduce barriers to the deployment of broadband infrastructure across the state in partnership with ISPs.
- e. Develop one or more draft uniform contract, application, and/or permit template to facilitate the use of state property or rights-of-way for broadband deployment.

SECTION 6. **Administration**

The Office shall provide administrative and staff support for the Task Force.

SECTION 7. **Homework Gap**

By May 1, 2019, the Office shall present to the Governor specific, feasible recommendations to reduce the homework gap in North Carolina by 2020.

SECTION 8. **Dig Once Policy**

No later than July 1, 2019, DOT and DIT will jointly develop and issue a uniform Dig Once policy to reduce the scale and number of repeated excavations related to state road projects for the installation and maintenance of broadband infrastructure in rights-of-way.

DOT and DIT will jointly develop model Dig Once policies for potential adoption by county and municipal governments. DOT and DIT shall seek input from the North Carolina League of Municipalities, the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, and other stakeholders in developing these model policies.

SECTION 9. **Miscellaneous**

This Executive Order is consistent with and does not otherwise abrogate existing federal or state law.

This Executive Order is effective immediately. It supersedes and replaces all other Executive Orders on this subject. This Executive Order shall remain in effect until December 31, 2021, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 147-16.2, or until amended or rescinded.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto signed my name and affixed the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina at the Capitol in the City of Raleigh, this 14th day in the year of our Lord two thousand and nineteen.



Roy Cooper
Governor

ATTEST:



Elaine F. Marshall
Secretary of State

