

**LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD**

**Austin, Texas**

**FISCAL NOTE, 87TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION**

**March 17, 2021**

**TO:** Honorable Chris Paddie, Chair, House Committee on State Affairs

**FROM:** Jerry McGinty, Director, Legislative Budget Board

**IN RE: HB5** by Ashby (Relating to the expansion of broadband services to certain areas.), **As Introduced**

Depending upon the amount of grants, loans or incentives needed to expand broadband services in needed areas of the state, there would be an indeterminate fiscal implication to the state. Therefore, the fiscal implications of the bill cannot be determined.

The bill would create the State Broadband Development Office (SBDO) within the Comptroller's Office of Public Accounts. The SBDO would be required to establish and annually update a map that designates the eligibility of each census block. The map would have to be published by the SBDO on its website by January 1, 2022. The bill would require the SBDO to develop a state broadband plan by September 1, 2022.

The SBDO is required to establish a program to award grants, low-interest loans, and other financial incentives to applicants for the purpose of expanding access to and adoption of broadband service in census blocks. The amount of grants, loans or incentives needed is unknown.

The bill would create the new Broadband Development Account in the General Revenue Fund. The account would consist of legislative appropriations, gifts, grants, donations, and federal funds received for the purpose of broadband development. Money in the account could only be used for purposes of administering the SBDO, creating or updating the map, creating or updating the state broadband plan, or engaging in outreach to communities regarding the expansion and adoption of broadband service and the programs administered by the office.

According to the Comptroller's Office of Public Accounts, the proposed legislation is anticipated to result in a five year general revenue cost to the agency of \$3.8 million and require 5.0 additional FTEs to staff and perform the duties of the SBDO.

The legislation would do one or more of the following: create or recreate a dedicated account in the General Revenue Fund, create or recreate a special or trust fund either within or outside of the Treasury, or create a dedicated revenue source. The fund, account, or revenue dedication included in this bill would be subject to funds consolidation review by the current Legislature.

**Local Government Impact**

According to the Texas Association of Counties, no significant fiscal impact to counties is anticipated.

According to the cities of Abilene, El Paso, and Houston, no fiscal impact is anticipated.

**Source Agencies:** 300 Trusteed Programs - Gov, 304 Comptroller of Public Accounts

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