

Telecommunications Bills--2001

LB 41 Authorize the leasing of excess fiber optic capacity by public owners

Introduced by Sen. Landis

Committee: Transportation and Telecommunications

A public fiber owner or pool of such owners may lease its excess fiber optic capacity if the lease is let through a competitive bidding process. The lessee must be a certified telecommunications common carrier or a permitted telecommunications contract carrier. The lease shall have a duration of no more than five years and must be relet through a competitive bidding process.

LB 89 Establish an application process for the installation and delivery of broadband and advanced telecommunications infrastructure and services

Introduced by Sen. Wickersham and Sen. Bromm

Committee: Transportation and Telecommunications

LB 89 authorizes up to 1% of the Nebraska Universal Service Fund to be used to assist municipalities or counties to procure advanced telecommunications services through a grant program. The Nebraska Universal Service Fund currently collects about \$50 million annually. The county or municipality would not become a service provider.

LB 90 Authorize qualifying businesses to obtain funding for certain telecommunications services

Introduced by Sen. Wickersham and Sen. Bromm

Committee: Transportation and Telecommunications

LB 90 amends the Local Option Municipal Economic Development Act to include entities providing advanced telecommunications capability as a qualifying businesses under the act.

LB 334 Require the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission to establish telehealth system

Introduced by Sen. Jensen

Committee: Health and Human Services

The Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing will establish a telehealth system to provide access for deaf and hard of hearing persons to mental health, alcoholism, and drug abuse services.

LB 463 Regulate certain leases of dark fiber optic capacity

Introduced by Sen. Kristensen

Committee: Transportation and Telecommunications

No state agency, political subdivision or entity created under the Interlocal Cooperation Act or Joint Public Agency Act shall operate as a telecommunications contract carrier or common carrier. A public power district may lease its dark fiber by forming a separate subsidiary of the district. The subsidiary would be subject to the same taxes as a private telecommunications provider and would pay the public power district fair market value for services, assets, personnel, facilities, and infrastructure used by the subsidiary.

LB 585 Provide for enhanced wireless 911 service and establish a surcharge on wireless service subscribers

Introduced by Senators Engel, Bromm, Connealy, et al

Commencing July 1, 2001, a surcharge of 50 cents per month per access line will be charged to wireless service subscribers and will be used to provide for enhanced wireless 911 service.

LB 588 Adopt the Rural Initiative Act

Introduced by Sen. Dierks

Committee: Agriculture

This bill states that it is the intent of the legislature that "the University of Nebraska shall develop and provide new initiatives and specific programs, service, and assistance in the areas of businesses development and entrepreneurship, e-commerce for small businesses, expansion of distance education, telehealth and telemedicine, and value added agriculture focused on rural Nebraska needs.

The bill creates an advisory board and appropriates \$750,000 per year from the general fund.

LB 617 Provide funding for technology projects in county offices and establish a filing fee

Introduced by Sen. Bruning

Committee: Government, Military, and Veterans Affairs

The register of deed and county clerk shall receive an additional \$5 fee per instrument for recording a deed, mortgage, or release, recording and indexing of a will, recording and indexing of a decree in a testate estate, recording proof of publications, or recording any other instrument. Three dollars of each fee shall be credited to a special fund in the county treasury set aside for technology projects. Two dollars of each fee shall be remitted to the State Treasurer to the County Records Improvement Fund. These funds

will be available for county technology projects through a grant program administered by the County Records Improvement Fund Committee.

LB 792 Changing cigarette tax rate and revenue distribution provisions

Introduced by Sen. Jensen

Committee: Revenue

This bill would increase the cigarette tax from 34 to 64 cents per pack to fund a number of projects including a newly created Telehealth Development Fund. The equivalent of 5 cents per pack would go to this fund.

LB 827 Provide for the sale or lease of dark fiber by governmental entities

Introduced by Sen. Bromm and Sen. Wickersham

Committee: Transportation and Telecommunications

Any agency or political subdivision of the state may own, sell or lease dark fiber. No agency or political subdivision of the state shall act as a common or contract carrier. Leases can be for no more than the market rate and must be approved by the Public Service Commission. Any profit earned by the lease is remitted to the Nebraska Telecommunications Universal Service Fund.