

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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129th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2019

Legislative Document

No. 173

H.P. 136

House of Representatives, January 17, 2019

**An Act To Promote Economic Development and Critical
Communications for Family Farms, Businesses and Residences by
Strategic Public Investment in High-speed Internet**

Reference to the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative McCREA of Fort Fairfield.
Cosponsored by Senator CARSON of Cumberland and
Representatives: BLUME of York, BRYANT of Windham, FARNSWORTH of Portland,
GROHOSKI of Ellsworth, HANDY of Lewiston, ROBERTS-LOVELL of South Berwick,
SCHNECK of Bangor, STANLEY of Medway.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **CONCEPT DRAFT**

3 **SUMMARY**

4 This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208.

5 This bill proposes to increase funding to the ConnectME Authority from \$1,000,000
6 to \$5,000,000 to expand universal broadband and high-speed Internet into rural areas
7 identified as the 6% of the State unserved by high-speed Internet. This bill proposes to
8 make expanding high-speed Internet into unserved rural areas a key emphasis in the
9 economic development of and to multiply the return to the State by directing the
10 ConnectME Authority to use the increased funding to increase the rate of strategic
11 broadband investment and leverage additional federal funding to provide middle-mile and
12 last-mile infrastructure in the unserved areas and to correct broadband deficiencies
13 identified in the ConnectME Authority's baseline update of 2013.