

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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122nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2005

Legislative Document

No. 1128

S.P. 392

In Senate, March 8, 2005

**An Act Directing the State Planning Office To Study Municipal
Capabilities To Become Providers of Internet Services**

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joy J. O'Brien".

JOY J. O'BRIEN
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator BROMLEY of Cumberland.

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

Sec. 1. 30-A MRSA §2101, as enacted by PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 and Pt. C, §106 and amended by PL 1989, c. 6, c. 9, §2 and c. 104, Pt. C, §§8 and 10, is further amended to read:

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§2101. Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to implement the home rule powers granted to municipalities by the Constitution of Maine, Article VIII, Part Second. Unless otherwise prohibited by law, nothing in the chapter may be construed to restrict a municipality's authority to become a provider of wireless Internet access.

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Sec. 2. Study and report of municipal capabilities to become providers of Internet services. The Executive Department, State Planning Office, in conjunction with the Public Utilities Commission and the Department of Economic and Community Development, shall study the following: the technology available for creating wireless Internet access throughout rural and urban municipalities in the State and its estimated cost; the various funding resources and strategic partnerships that may be available to municipalities to deliver wireless Internet services to their communities; and the long-term educational and economic benefits that could be derived from municipalities' becoming Internet service providers and the benefits to the State. The State Planning Office shall submit a report on its findings to the Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy no later than September 12, 2005. The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over telecommunications matters may report out a bill to the First Regular Session of the 123rd Legislature in response to the report.

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SUMMARY

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This bill clarifies that municipalities have the authority to become providers of wireless Internet services and requires the Executive Department, State Planning Office, in conjunction with the Public Utilities Commission and the Department of Economic and Community Development, to study the economic, technological and funding issues associated with municipalities' providing wireless Internet services to their communities. The bill requires the State Planning Office to submit a report on its findings to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over telecommunications matters and authorizes the committee to report out a bill after reviewing the report.