

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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128th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2017

Legislative Document

No. 256

H.P. 189

House of Representatives, January 31, 2017

An Act To Ensure Continued Availability of High-speed Broadband Internet at Maine's Schools and Libraries

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 GROHMAN of Biddeford.
Cosponsored by Senator MAKER of Washington and
Representatives: BERRY of Bowdoinham, FECTEAU of Biddeford, SHERMAN of Hodgdon,
SKOLFIELD of Weld, Senator: CARPENTER of Aroostook.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 35-A MRSA §7104-B, sub-§3, ¶A**, as amended by PL 2011, c. 623, Pt.
3 B, §21, is further amended to read:

4 A. Limit the amount collected to ~~no more than 0.7%~~ \$4,200,000 annually, assessed
5 as a percentage of retail charges for 2-way voice communications services as
6 determined by the commission, excluding interstate tolls or interstate private line
7 services;

8 **Sec. 2. 35-A MRSA §7104-B, sub-§3, ¶B**, as enacted by PL 1999, c. 409, §2, is
9 amended to read:

10 B. Ensure that the funds are collected in a competitively neutral and equitable
11 manner;

12 **Sec. 3. Stakeholder group to evaluate method of collection of funds.** The
13 Public Utilities Commission, using existing resources, shall convene a stakeholder group
14 to evaluate whether the current method of collection of funds to support the
15 telecommunications education access fund, established pursuant to the Maine Revised
16 Statutes, Title 35-A, section 7104-B, subsection 2, is competitively neutral, equitable and
17 sustainable. To the maximum extent possible, the recommendations from this group must
18 reflect consensus among the stakeholders. The Public Utilities Commission shall submit
19 a report to the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology by January
20 30, 2018 that includes:

- 21 1. An overview of the stakeholder group's discussions;
- 22 2. The conclusions of the stakeholder group, including any recommended changes to
23 the method of assessment;
- 24 3. Any areas in which stakeholders were unable to reach consensus;
- 25 4. Changes to law, rule or policies needed to carry out an alternative to the current
26 method of collection of funds;
- 27 5. A proposed timeline for implementation of an alternative to the current method of
28 collection of funds;
- 29 6. A description of legal barriers to implementation of the stakeholder group's
30 recommendations; and
- 31 7. Any other recommendations of the stakeholder group.

32 The joint standing committee may report out a bill to the Second Regular Session of
33 the 128th Legislature related to the report.

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SUMMARY

This bill changes the limit on the amount collected on prepaid wireless telecommunications service from a percentage to a flat amount. This bill also requires the Public Utilities Commission to convene a stakeholder group to evaluate and provide recommendations regarding the method of collection of funds to support telecommunications access at libraries and public schools. The commission is required to report to the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology by January 30, 2018, and the committee is authorized to submit a bill based on the report.