

# Sen. Smith: Statement on creation of the governor's task force on broadband access

Posted on Tuesday, Jul 14, 2020

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MADISON - Today, Governor Tony Evers announced the creation of the [Broadband Access Task Force](#). The Governor's Task Force on Broadband Access will include representation from telecommunication experts, professionals in the fields of education and healthcare, and state legislators. The Task Force will hold meetings and hear from experts on broadband expansion before submitting policy recommendations to Governor Evers.

The 2019-21 biennial budget included \$48 million to grow the Broadband Expansion grant program, which is the largest investment made toward improving broadband expansion in the state's history. In January, Senator Jeff Smith (D - Brunswick) introduced the ["Better Broadband" bill package](#), six bills aimed at improving broadband expansion in Wisconsin.

The Governor's Task Force on Broadband Access is the latest effort to improve broadband in Wisconsin, especially at a time when improving internet access is most critical. In June, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation released [the "Wisconsin Tomorrow" report](#), which describes the impact of COVID-19 on Wisconsin and outlines key strategies to mitigate the overwhelming impact of the pandemic, including the necessity and urgency to fix broadband.

In response to the creation of the Governor's Task Force on Broadband Access, Sen. Smith shared the following statement:

“I’m really pleased to see the need for broadband expansion finally getting the attention it deserves. Stark inequities exist between Wisconsin’s rural and urban communities due to the lack of reliable internet; the COVID-19 pandemic has only made these inequities more visible. I’ve heard directly from teachers and superintendents, business owners and families, and have experienced firsthand, the shortcomings of Wisconsin’s existing broadband infrastructure.

“Reliable, affordable broadband is essential. Wisconsin must fix the fundamental issues resulting in the lack of broadband to ensure our state’s rural communities have an equal opportunity to learn, work and connect with others. In doing so, we can encourage the next generation to settle down and be a part of everything Wisconsin’s rural communities have to offer while promoting rural prosperity in our state.

“I look forward to the important work the Governor’s Task Force on Broadband Access will accomplish. I will continue advocating for improved broadband access and would be proud to share my insight with the Task Force to develop policy and make a difference. It’s our duty to do what we can to make Wiscon