

Rep. Summerfield: Governor Evers vetoes broadband grant restructuring legislation

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MADISON – Representative Rob Summerfield (R-Bloomer) responded to Governor Evers’ veto of [Senate Bill 365](#). This bill would have restructured the Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grant Program, making it more effective and efficient.

“I am extremely disappointed that Governor Evers has chosen to ignore the needs of Wisconsinites in desperate need of broadband connection. Having reliable internet throughout the state is more important than ever. With more and more people working from home, this problem is not going away, and I want to be sure that Wisconsin is prepared.

“Unfortunately, the Broadband Expansion Grant Program as it stands today has not kept up with our evolving technological landscape. Under the current system, an “unserved” area is defined as an area that lacks a provider who offers speeds at 20% of the federal standard. That equates to speeds of approximately 5 Mbps, which is wholly inadequate if Wisconsin’s economy is expected to remain competitive in the coming decades.

“The program also currently has an “underserved” category that allows for the state to subsidize internet expansion into areas that already have access to high-speed internet services. I am worried that necessary dollars will be funneled into areas that already have internet services and rural areas that lack internet connection will be left behind. Broadband access is an important tool for economic development throughout our state, especially in rural communities.

“With this veto, the governor has decided to keep Wisconsin in the dark ages.

Restructuring this program and allowing it to reach its maximum potential to move this state forward should be a priority for Governor Evers. Unfortunately, it is not.