



Indiana Broadband Expansion: Enhancing Pole Attachment Processes

Presented by: Senator Andy Zay

Purpose of SB 502

- Defines "attachment request" and "process management agreement"
- Establishes timelines for publishing contracts and holding project meetings
- Mandates negotiation of agreements between attaching entities and pole owners
- Introduces rapid response mediation for disputes
- Sets expiration date for provisions: July 1, 2030



Why this matters?



- **\$868M in federal BEAD funding** allocated to Indiana for broadband expansion.
- **Over 200,000 Hoosiers** currently lack access to high-speed internet.
- **Rural and underserved communities** disproportionately affected by digital inequity.
- **Economic, educational, and healthcare opportunities** hindered by lack of connectivity.
- **Senate Bill 502** aims to streamline processes, reduce delays, and ensure efficient use of federal funds.



Legislative Momentum

- In summer 2024, rural broadband grant projects were delayed due to pole owner inaction—some approvals taking over 500 days.
- Delays jeopardized billions in state and federal grants (NLC, RDOF, BEAD) and critical private investments.
- Main delays came from rural electric co-ops and investor-owned utilities.
- SB 502 was introduced to establish response timelines and ensure faster collaboration between pole owners and ISPs.
- The bill received unanimous, bipartisan support, highlighting its urgency and practicality.



Key Definitions

Attachment Request: A request by an attaching entity to install equipment on 300+ poles within 30 days, funded by state or federal broadband programs.

Process Management Agreement: A written agreement between an attaching entity and a pole owner (owning 300+ poles) to establish processes, timelines, and conflict resolution for attachment requests.

Transparency and Collaboration

- Indiana Broadband Office (IBO) to publish contracts within 5 business days of execution.
- Mandatory meeting within 60 days of contract execution between attaching entity and pole owner to discuss project plans.





Timely Agreement Negotiation

- If no agreement is in place within 4 months after federal funding approval, attaching entity and pole owner must negotiate an agreement.
- Failure to reach an agreement affects applications for pole attachment permits involving fewer than 3,000 poles within 30 days.

Dispute Resolution Mechanism

- IBO authorized to adopt a rapid response mediation process for disputes between attaching entities and pole owners.
- Aim to resolve conflicts efficiently, minimizing project delays.





Sunset Clause

- All provisions of this legislation expire on July 1, 2030.
- Allows for assessment and potential adjustment of policies based on effectiveness.