



# OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT & BUDGET

## State Budget Office

One Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02908-5890

Office: (401) 222-6300

*State Fiscal Note for Bill Number:*

**2026-H 7333**

**Date of State Budget Office Approval:** Monday, March 30, 2026

**Date Requested:** Monday, March 9, 2026

**Date Due:** Thursday, March 19, 2026

<i>Impact on Expenditures</i>		<i>Impact on Revenues</i>	
FY 2026	N/A	FY 2026	N/A
FY 2027	\$50,000 - \$400,000	FY 2027	N/A
FY 2028	N/A	FY 2028	N/A

### Explanation by State Budget Office:

This act would enact the Rhode Island Broadband Oversight and Accountability Act of 2026. The legislation would amend current law to remove statutory barriers that prevent the State from conducting oversight and monitoring of broadband services. The act also directs the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation to develop and submit a plan to the General Assembly regarding the creation of a broadband oversight authority or similar structure. The plan must include recommendations regarding the authority's mission, organizational structure, staffing, coordination with relevant stakeholders, and potential funding mechanisms.

### Summary of Facts and Assumptions:

This act would take effect upon passage. For this reason, no fiscal impact is estimated in FY 2026.

This legislation authorizes the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation to hire contractors or add a full-time equivalent employee to ensure compliance with the planning requirements. The plan must be submitted within one year of the effective date.

According to the Corporation, the required work would not be able to be conducted using existing staff funded through federal broadband programs without federal approval, as the planning efforts are outside the scope of current grant-funded activities. The Corporation indicated that it would likely need to engage a consultant with subject matter expertise to complete the analysis, with estimated costs ranging from \$50,000 for a high-level review to \$400,000 for a more detailed plan with implementation recommendations. While existing staff may be able to manage a consulting engagement, external expertise would be required to complete work.

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) administers broadband programs across the United States. In Rhode Island, the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program is funded by NTIA. The Corporation stated that, barring any new guidance from NTIA, federal funding to support such planning has a low likelihood of being approved.

### Comments on Sources of Funds:

Any costs incurred by the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation associated with the preparation of this plan would be supported through existing agency appropriations or available federal broadband program funds.



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Summary of Fiscal Impact:

This legislation may result in expenditures by the Corporation associated with the procurement of consultant services to develop the required broadband oversight plan. Based on agency input, these costs could range from approximately \$50,000 to \$400,000, depending on the scope of the analysis. The extent to which these costs could be supported with federal broadband program funds is uncertain. Therefore, the fiscal impact is indeterminate.

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Fiscal Advisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_