



# Office of the City Clerk

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## Legislation Text

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Joint Committee on Finance and Committee on Economic, Capital and  
Technology and Development

### RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Many residents of the City of Chicago lack access to high-speed internet connections at affordable prices; and

WHEREAS, Access to high-speed Internet connections is important because work, education and entertainment are increasingly moving online; and

WHEREAS, In most places in the United States, broadband access is exclusively provided by a small number of telecom companies; and ^

WHEREAS, State and local governments are starting to play an important role in making access to broadband networks available in their areas; and

WHEREAS, Municipalities have developed a variety of strategies for building local-owned broadband networks and promoting higher-speed Internet access; and

WHEREAS, In Chattanooga, Tennessee, a government-owned electric utility has built a citywide fiber network that operates 8,000 miles of fiber for 60,000 residential and 4,500 business customers and which President Obama has credited with helping to spur more technology and innovation in the city; and

WHEREAS, Near Salt Lake City, a group of towns have commissioned a private company to build a fiber-optic network for that area; and

WHEREAS, Universities and local governments in the Research Triangle area of North Carolina are working with AT&T to upgrade its network there; and

WHEREAS, Local governments in Connecticut have developed a program under which they will contract with a private entity to build and operate a state-of-the-art fiber-optic network at lower cost for users than traditional Internet service delivered by cable and phone companies; and

WHEREAS, New York is relying on regional economic development councils to develop plans for bringing faster Internet services to their parts of the state; and

WHEREAS, Wilson, North Carolina has built a fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) network through the town's electricity provider and the network currently provides television, phone, and internet services to more than a third of Wilson's 21,000 households; and

WHEREAS, Lafayette, Louisiana has constructed a FTTH network through its publicly-owned Lafayette Utilities System (LUS), and as competing firms adjusted their plans to account

for LUS Fiber's market entry, residents who were not customers of the network started to benefit from lower prices; and

WHEREAS, Scott County, Minnesota, through a joint effort between local government, state government and the private sector, has installed a high-speed network that connects all county-owned facilities, including schools, libraries, city halls, police and fire departments and public safety towers, which has resulted in significant savings while attracting private investment and fostering job creation; and

WHEREAS, In 2008 the Massachusetts Broadband Initiative (MBI) was charged with bringing broadband to all residents and businesses in Massachusetts within three years and, working closely with the private sector, MBI developed "MassBroadband123", a network that serves 123 communities in the region and has an open architecture that allows any Internet service provider to purchase wholesale services on the network at the same rates; and

WHEREAS, Municipal broadband networks have increased access, encouraged competition, fostered consumer choice, and driven local and regional economic development; and

WHEREAS, Municipalities are now benefiting from significant cost savings by shifting their institutional broadband costs from private providers to their own public fiber-optic networks; and

WHEREAS, Local investments have also spurred the private sector to compete for customers, improve services, increase broadband adoption, and provide more choice for consumers; and

WHEREAS, Municipal broadband networks additionally have the potential to generate revenue for local and state governments; and

WHEREAS, The City of Chicago possesses a variety of public assets and infrastructure that may be leveraged to support the development and expansion of a comprehensive telecommunications network; and

WHEREAS, The City of Chicago owns and/or operates a series of fiber lines that may be leveraged to help make high-speed broadband service available at affordable prices; and

WHEREAS, The City of Chicago should endeavor to bring high-capacity fiber-optic lines to homes, institutions, and business in a way that could lower costs and increase competition among Internet providers; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, That the City Council of the City of Chicago does hereby request the Commissioner of the Department of Innovation and Technology and appropriate designees to appear before a Joint Committee of the Committee on Finance and the Committee on Economic,

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Capital and Technology Development at a hearing to discuss and inform the City Council of ways to make public use of the City's fiber-optic resources for the personal and commercial use of its residents.

Alderman Daniel Solis, 25th Ward

Alderman Margaret Laurino, 39th Ward