



State of Wisconsin
2019 - 2020 LEGISLATURE

LRB-4874/1
MDK:ahe&cdc

2019 SENATE BILL 834

February 20, 2020 - Introduced by Senators SCHACHTNER, SMITH, RINGHAND, CARPENTER, ERPENBACH, HANSEN and MILLER, cosponsored by Representatives SHANKLAND, VRUWINK, DOYLE, ANDERSON, CONSIDINE, EMERSON, KOLSTE, MILROY, OHNSTAD, POPE, SARGENT, SINICKI, SPREITZER, STUBBS and SUBECK. Referred to Committee on Utilities and Housing.

1 **AN ACT** ***to renumber*** 196.504 (1) (ad) and 196.504 (1) (ae); ***to amend*** 196.504
2 (2) (c); and ***to create*** 196.504 (1) (af) of the statutes; ***relating to:*** prioritizing
3 certain farm projects under the broadband expansion grant program.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

Under current law, the Public Service Commission makes grants to eligible applicants for the purpose of constructing broadband infrastructure in underserved areas. In making the grants, current law requires the PSC to give priority to projects that satisfy various requirements. This bill requires the PSC to also give priority to projects for expanding fiber optic broadband lines to farms. The bill defines “farm” as land primarily devoted to agricultural uses related to crop and animal production that are referenced in a rule promulgated by the Department of Revenue.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

- 4 **SECTION 1.** 196.504 (1) (ad) of the statutes is renumbered 196.504 (1) (ah).
5 **SECTION 2.** 196.504 (1) (ae) of the statutes is renumbered 196.504 (1) (ak).
6 **SECTION 3.** 196.504 (1) (af) of the statutes is created to read:

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196.504 (1) (af) “Farm” means land primarily devoted to an agricultural use, as defined in s. Tax 18.05 (1) (a) or (b), Wis. Adm. Code.

SECTION 4. 196.504 (2) (c) of the statutes is amended to read:

196.504 (2) (c) To establish criteria for evaluating applications and awarding grants under this section. The criteria shall prohibit grants that have the effect of subsidizing the expenses of a provider of telecommunications service, as defined in s. 182.017 (1g) (cq), or the monthly bills of customers of those providers. The criteria shall give priority to projects that include matching funds, that expand fiber optic broadband lines to farms, that involve public-private partnerships, that affect unserved areas, that are scalable, that promote economic development, that will not result in delaying the provision of broadband service to areas neighboring areas to be served by the proposed project, or that affect a large geographic area or a large number of underserved individuals or communities. When evaluating grant applications under this section, the commission shall consider the degree to which the proposed projects would duplicate existing broadband infrastructure, information about the presence of which is provided to the commission by the applicant or another person within a time period designated by the commission; the impacts of the proposed projects on the ability of individuals to access health care services from home and the cost of those services; and the impacts of the proposed projects on the ability of students to access educational opportunities from home.

(END)