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Hogan Administration Announces Funding for Rural Internet Connectivity

May 22, 2020

Hogan Administration Announces Funding for Rural Internet Connectivity
Nearly $9.6 million to support broadband infrastructure and projects

NEW CARROLLTON, MD (May 22, 2020) – Governor Larry Hogan today announced the Board of Public Works has approved nearly $9.6 million in funding, administered by the Office of Rural Broadband, to support broadband internet connectivity for more than 5,000 households and businesses in Maryland's rural counties and communities. Housed in Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, the Office of Rural Broadband was established by executive order in 2017 to expand broadband capabilities statewide in rural areas of Maryland.

"This rapid and unprecedented shift to teleworking and distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic further demonstrates the importance of high-speed internet access for a Marylanders," said Governor Hogan. "This funding continues my administration's proactive efforts to increase broadband service in our state's underserved communities."

The Office of Rural Broadband provided nearly $2.3 million to eight local jurisdictions in western and southern Maryland and on the Eastern Shore through the Maryland Broadba Pilot Funding Program. With this funding, local governments will partner with an Internet Service Provider serving the community to develop and manage projects to extend exist networks to incorporate underserved or unserved households. The projects receiving funding will provide internet access to more than 1,300 households and approximately 70 businesses in rural communities.

Additionally, nearly $7.3 million was provided through the Maryland Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program, designed to support the construction of necessary broadband infrastructure to expand services. Approximately $5.1 million in funds will support three large-scale broadband infrastructure projects in Somerset, Garrett and Charles Counties. Nearly $2.2 million of this funding was awarded to the Maryland Broadband Cooperative, Inc. and will extend broadband service to an estimated 950 households in Allegany, Ch Dorchester, Garrett, and Wicomico Counties.

This funding follows the Board of Public Works' prior approval of emergency broadband resources to five jurisdictions. Funds were used to expand access to school and library broadband networks in rural communities in response to the COVID-19 Stay At Home Order.

For more information, visit dhcd.maryland.gov/RuralBroadband.

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