

# North Carolina Legislature Releases Broadband Inventory Maps as First Step to Maximize Federal Stimulus



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*State Legislative and Executive leaders have joined with rural advocates and the state's broadband providers to create reliable broadband inventory for North Carolina*

**Raleigh, NC** –Today, Rep. Bill Faison and other legislative and executive branch leaders joined high-speed Internet service providers, North Carolina Farm Bureau, and Connect North Carolina to announce the release of the state's first accurate broadband inventory map that illustrates the extent of broadband services available across North Carolina. The Connect North Carolina map, which represents broadband availability data from more than 30 broadband providers across the state, is expected to serve as a key asset for the state's application process for federal stimulus funding to support broadband investment. In light of the short timeframe outlined in the recently released broadband stimulus Notice of Funding Availability, North Carolina is now prepared to quickly and efficiently outline the state's need for improved broadband investment.

"It is essential that North Carolina does everything necessary to be competitive to take advantage of broadband stimulus funds," Rep. Faison said. "I am happy to join with the state's broadband providers and Connect North Carolina to put North Carolina on the fast track with the broadband inventory map."

The Connect North Carolina broadband map illustrates broadband service availability at the household level, based on information from all types of providers, companies large and small, across North Carolina. Most importantly, the broadband map illustrates the service opportunities that remain in rural and other hard-to-reach locations.

North Carolina Farm Bureau is partnering with Connect North Carolina to provide rural leadership that ensures that every farm family and rural household has the ability to connect to high speed services. Moreover, North Carolina Farm Bureau members will play an important role in helping to validate and improve the data that is collected for the broadband inventory maps, ensuring a high level of accuracy and transparency in the data that is collected directly from broadband service providers and made available to the public through a searchable, interactive website. Farm Bureau president, Larry Wooten, was on hand for the map unveiling event.

"The ability to connect to the Internet through broadband services is an important component of rural infrastructure," said president Wooten. "This broadband map is a great step toward ensuring that North Carolina's farm families and rural people are able to do business and

compete in our global economy. North Carolina Farm Bureau is proud to support this important effort.”

“The federal government is providing stimulus funds as an investment in broadband so all Americans can fully realize the promise of technology. By mapping the current level of service in North Carolina, the state is better equipped to maximize the impact of these investments,” said Brian R. Mefford, Chairman and CEO of Connected Nation, parent company of Connect North Carolina. “The map provides North Carolina the opportunity to remain a technology leader among states, becoming one of only a handful of states that have taken this important step.”

The map was developed under the leadership of broadband providers across the state and the leadership of North Carolina’s state leaders. Through a rigorous system of broadband data collection, GIS analysis, and data verification, Connect North Carolina’s mapping project determined that broadband service is currently available to 92% of North Carolina households statewide through land-based or fixed wireless technology. This leaves approximately 241,000 North Carolina households who are unserved by a terrestrial broadband provider.

Through its interactive website ([www.connectnorthcarolina.org](http://www.connectnorthcarolina.org)), Connect North Carolina offers consumers and businesses across the state the opportunity to validate provider data and ensure the highest level of accuracy to the broadband maps by providing opportunities to offer feedback and corrections. The interactive site allows individuals and businesses to search an address and generate a list of broadband providers serving each address. The site also allows consumers to check the accuracy of the broadband map, report concerns, and test the speed of their current connections.

Currently, more than \$7 billion is available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) for broadband projects nationwide. In the ARRA, \$350 million funds the Broadband Data Improvement Act of 2008, which establishes the need for each state to complete a broadband inventory map in order to efficiently plan for broadband infrastructure investments and to ensure that resources are being effectively used by citizens. Grant funds are available for states to develop public-private partnerships for grassroots-driven expansion of broadband and computer use, particularly among unserved and underserved populations. With the broadband inventory, North Carolina is better equipped to use broadband stimulus funding in areas where broadband is not readily available.

A recent study by Connected Nation found that a comprehensive, grassroots-driven program that improves broadband access and use in North Carolina could result in a total economic impact of \$3.6 billion through the creation of more than 69,000 jobs and cost savings in areas such as healthcare, the environment and through activities such as telecommuting.

Connected Nation is a national non-profit and the parent company of non-profit Connect North Carolina. Connected Nation works across the United States to create public-private partnerships that seek to increase the availability and the use of broadband and related technology. Through programs such as providing computers to underprivileged households and community service organizations, Connected Nation is able to effectively address barriers to adoption pertaining to affordability and tech literacy. Through its extensive national work, Connected Nation has proven that states and communities can realize a significant economic and social impact when broadband is universally available to all people wherever they may live.

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**About Connect North Carolina:** Connect North Carolina is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to supporting the broadband-based development of North Carolina. Connect North Carolina is working in partnership with technology providers to develop a broadband inventory map for the purpose of improving digital inclusion statewide. For more information about Connect North Carolina, visit [www.connectnorthcarolina.org](http://www.connectnorthcarolina.org).

**About Connected Nation:** Connected Nation is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that expands access to and use of broadband Internet and the related technologies that are enabled when individuals and communities have the opportunity and desire to connect. Connected Nation effectively raises the awareness of the value of broadband and related technologies by developing coalitions of influencers and enablers for technology deployment and adoption. Connected Nation works with community stakeholders, states and technology providers to develop and implement technology expansion programs with core competencies centered around a mission to improve digital inclusion for people and places previously underserved or overlooked. For more information about Connected Nation, Inc., visit [www.connectednation.org](http://www.connectednation.org).