HB 2765 -- BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

SPONSOR: Riggs

The bill establishes the "Broadband Pole Replacement Program". Under the program, the Department of Economic Development must award pole reimbursements using funds available in the "Broadband Pole Replacement Fund" established in the bill. A pole owner or a provider of qualifying broadband service who pays or incurs the costs of removing and replacing an existing pole in an unserved area for the purpose of accommodating the attachment of an eligible broadband facility may apply to the Department for a reimbursement award.

The Department must issue a pole reimbursement for up to 50% of the eligible pole replacement costs incurred or $4,000, whichever is less, and 100% of the documented and reasonable administrative expenses incurred by the applicant in preparing and submitting the reimbursement application, not to exceed 5% of the eligible pole replacement costs in the application.

Requirements for an application for reimbursement are specified in the bill. The Department must award pole reimbursements until funds are no longer available.

One year after pole reimbursement funds are exhausted, the Director of the Department must identify, examine, and report on the deployment of broadband infrastructure and technology facilitated by the pole reimbursements awarded by the Department.

This bill is similar to SB 990 (2022).