

Rural Broadband in Maryland

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Access Still an Issue

- In Maryland, depending on the standard, somewhere between 15-20% of Maryland households lack access to high speed internet.
- Nationally the number is much higher, 39-40%.
- Most homes can access the internet using satellite or cellular service however there are speed and latency issues with those technologies.

State Entities created to Solve Broadband Access Issue

- Rural Broadband Coordinating Council (Reauthorized under HB 961 from 2018 Legislative Session)
- Maryland Broadband Cooperative (created in 2006)
- Office of Rural Broadband (created in 2017)
- One Maryland Broadband Network
 - A 1,324-mile fiber optic broadband network that links 1,068 government facilities and community “anchor institutions” in every county in the state, while interconnecting and extending three independent networks: networkMaryland, the statewide network operated by DoIT, the Inter-County Broadband Network (ICBN), a consortium of 9 central Maryland counties and cities and the Maryland Broadband Cooperative (MDBC), a rural non-profit carrier

Task Force on Rural Internet, Broadband, Wireless and Cellular Service

- Created in 2017 with reauthorization for another year ending in 2019
- Task Force Guidelines
 - Facilitating innovation and expansion by removing barriers and obstacles
 - No new government structures or entities
 - No regulation of the internet
 - Internet is not considered a utility under federal law
 - Technology Agnostic
 - Facilitating competition

Task Force

- Issued report in January 2018
 - Ease permitting and access to rights-of-way
 - Move Office of Rural Broadband to Department of Housing and Community Development
 - Inventory state assets
- Issued report in January 2019
 - Allow Rural Electric Cooperatives to utilize rights-of-way for broadband services
 - Support Governor's appropriation

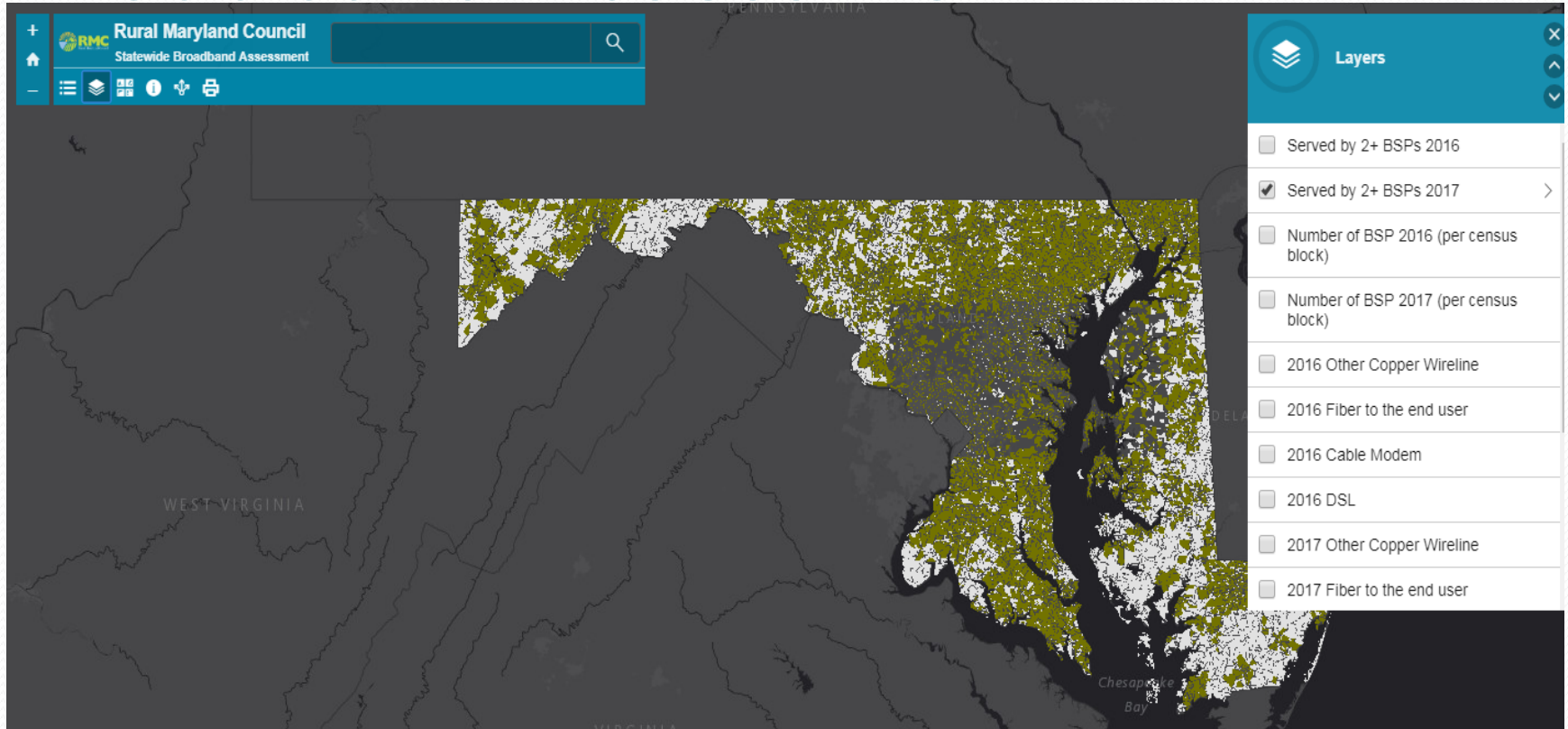
2019 Legislative Session

- Maryland General Assembly and the Governor signed into law SB634(Chapter 277) allowing rural electric cooperatives to offer broadband services
- Governor appropriated \$9,875,000 for local governments to expand broadband services

Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund

- Funds infrastructure projects including broadband
- Have funded five broadband projects
 - Small extension between Town Hall and new library in Myersville MD
 - User demand study in Southern Maryland
 - Two fiber projects in the Town of Denton
 - Installation costs of 200 low-income homes in Garrett County

Rural Maryland Council Statewide Broadband Assessment



Contact Information

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