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SENATE BILL 1003*

| Short Title: | WOW e-CDC/Funds. | (Public) |
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| Sponsors: | Senators Jenkins,  Davis and Jones. |
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| Referred to: | Appropriations/Base Budget. |
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March 26, 2009

1      A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2  AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO WOW E-COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
3      CORPORATION TO CONTINUE AS THE DESIGNATED TECHNOLOGY
4      RESOURCE CENTER FOR GRASSROOTS EFFORTS IN SOME OF THE STATE'S
5      NORTHEASTERN COUNTIES AND TO SUPPORT AND MENTOR SIMILAR
6      EFFORTS IN SOME WESTERN COUNTIES.
7            Whereas, northeastern North Carolina is the State's most economically distressed
8  region with 11 Tier 1 counties, over 30 municipalities that have less than 1,500 people, and
9  many communities that need assistance to participate in the State's technology driven economy;
10  and
11            Whereas, many of the communities in northeastern  and western North Carolina do
12  not have the resources to address technology issues, including digital literacy and the
13  availability of affordable broadband; and
14            Whereas, many of these communities lack public access to computers and the
15  Internet because of the absence of broadband infrastructure; and
16            Whereas, the lack of broadband, public access to computers and the Internet, and the
17  lack of assistance to address technology-related issues negatively impacts education, economic
18  development, and the quality of life in northeastern North Carolina; and
19            Whereas, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will make federal funding
20  available through direct grants from the National Telecommunications and Information
21  Administration to eligible organizations for broadband deployment, public access to computers,
22  and digital literacy, and to grassroots technology centers; and
23            Whereas, Windows on the World e-Community Development Corporation (WOW
24  e-CDC) has been involved in efforts to provide access to computers, the Internet, and
25  affordable broadband in underserved areas of the State, including: (i) distributing surplus
26  computers to schools, faith-based organizations, and low-wealth families in northeastern North
27  Carolina; (ii) completing the only independent, verifiable, and transparent 21-county broadband
28  accessibility study in the State; (iii) developing an online news service for and about
29  northeastern North Carolina; (iv) developing public access points in several communities where
30  there is available broadband infrastructure; and (v) applying for and receiving a $100,000
31  USDA grant for the purpose of establishing broadband in critical facilities in four northeastern
32  counties; Now, therefore,
33  The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:
34            **SECTION 1.**  There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
35  Commerce the sum of five hundred fifty thousand dollars ($550,000) for the 2009-2010 fiscal
36  year and the sum of five hundred fifty thousand dollars ($550,000) for the 2010-2011 fiscal
37  year for WOW e-CDC.  The funds shall be used by WOW e-CDC as follows:

1.    $200,000 for operation of the Windows on the World Technology Center.
2.    $200,000 for providing technical assistance to eligible applicants in northeastern North Carolina applying for federal grant funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to provide greater access to and use of broadband technology; acquisition and distribution of surplus computers in low-wealth communities; operation of the online news service for and about northeastern North Carolina; providing a site for distance learning; and supporting efforts of the WOW West Technology Resource Center.
3.    $50,000 for operation of the WOW e-CDC Internet service provider.
4.    $100,000 to fund the activities of WOW e-WEST, which provides technology resource services to Yancey, Madison, Avery, Mitchell, and McDowell Counties, including providing technical assistance for eligible applicants in these counties; establishing a western North Carolina Technology Resource Center; establishing public access points for using computers and broadband technology in western North Carolina; providing a site for distance learning; and distributing surplus computers within the counties.

**SECTION 2.**  This act becomes effective July 1, 2009.