



## NCRGEA *Government Relations* Update

### **NCRGEA Government Relations Update #21-20 June 1, 2021**

#### **Budget Process Yet to Begin**

In January when this legislative session officially began there was great support from the Governor, the Senate and the House to pass a comprehensive 2-year budget. In odd years, 2021, the Senate provides the initial version of budget and sends it to the House for consideration. As of June 1, 2021, the last month of the fiscal year, the Senate has not had any budget hearings on their proposed budget.

The bottom line is that the House has provided the Senate with no less than 5 offers of revenue to make available to spend in the next biennium. The House's latest proposal projects budget growth of 5%. This amount is too rich for the Senate, which would like to see growth at less than 2.5%. So, the House and Senate have come to a standstill even before they have started the budget process.

Regardless of their differences, the House will begin holding public budget meetings this week with the intention of producing its budget with or without the Senate. It appears we are heading for another year of budget uncertainty and perhaps another year of lacking a comprehensive document to allocate the State's finances.

#### **Broadband takes Center Stage**

Governor Cooper has announced his plan to bring [digital equity](#) across North Carolina and the House passed [HB 947](#) The G.R.E.A.T. Broadband Expansion Act.

The Governor's plan expends **\$1.2 billion**

\$600 million -To rapidly build **crucial infrastructure** in unserved areas.  
\$420 million - To promote federal programs for **affordable internet**.  
\$165 million - Provides **devices, repair support & digital literacy and skills training** to 365,000 households.

The Governor's plan has little detail to date on the how funds will be distributed. More details are forthcoming in the days ahead.

**Hb -947** The G.R.E.A.T. Broadband Expansion Act expends **\$750 million**  
\$350 million – To the **Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology Fund**.  
\$400 million - To the **Completing Access to Broadband** program.

HB – 947 and the Governor's proposals use existing infrastructure to allocate funds through the Office of Broadband Infrastructure.

**Stay Tuned!!**

**Richard Rogers**  
**NCRGEA Executive Director**