

(1) IT IS THE POLICY OF THE STATE TO FOSTER TELECOMMUNICATION AND COMPUTER NETWORKING AMONG STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, THEIR AGENCIES, AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE STATE;

(2) THERE IS A NEED TO IMPROVE ACCESS, ESPECIALLY IN RURAL AREAS, TO EFFICIENT TELECOMMUNICATION AND COMPUTER NETWORK CONNECTIONS;

(3) IMPROVEMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATION AND COMPUTER NETWORKING FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS PROMOTES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE USE AND DEVELOPMENT, AND EFFICIENCY IN STATE AND LOCAL ADMINISTRATION;

(4) RATES FOR THE INTRASTATE INTER-LATA TELEPHONE COMMUNICATIONS NEEDED FOR EFFECTIVE INTEGRATION OF TELECOMMUNICATION AND COMPUTER RESOURCES ARE PROHIBITIVE FOR MANY SMALLER GOVERNMENTS, AGENCIES, AND INSTITUTIONS; AND

(5) THE USE OF IMPROVED STATE TELECOMMUNICATION AND COMPUTER NETWORKING UNDER THIS SECTION IS INTENDED NOT TO COMPETE WITH COMMERCIAL ACCESS TO ADVANCED NETWORK TECHNOLOGY, BUT RATHER TO FOSTER FUNDAMENTAL EFFICIENCIES IN GOVERNMENT AND EDUCATION FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD.

(B) (1) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ESTABLISH A TELECOMMUNICATION AND COMPUTER NETWORK IN THE STATE.

(2) THE NETWORK SHALL CONSIST OF:

(I) ONE OR MORE CONNECTION FACILITIES FOR TELECOMMUNICATION AND COMPUTER CONNECTION IN EACH LOCAL ACCESS TRANSPORT AREA (LATA) IN THE STATE; AND

(II) FACILITIES, AUXILIARY EQUIPMENT, AND SERVICES REQUIRED TO SUPPORT THE NETWORK IN A RELIABLE AND SECURE MANNER.

(C) THE NETWORK SHALL BE ACCESSIBLE THROUGH DIRECT CONNECTION AND THROUGH LOCAL INTRA-LATA TELECOMMUNICATIONS TO STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE STATE.