



For Immediate Release

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**Connecting Florida Applauds & Thanks Governor DeSantis
for Signing HB 969 into Law**

*New Law Allows for Important Broadband Infrastructure Development
Through M-CORES Program*

Tallahassee, Fla. – [Connecting Florida](#) today applauded and thanked Florida Governor Ron DeSantis for signing [House Bill 969](#), related to Broadband Internet Service, into law.

HB 969 aims to increase broadband access across the state, particularly in rural, underserved, and unserved areas, by establishing the Florida Office of Broadband and allowing up to \$5 million of the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program funds to be used for broadband infrastructure development within or adjacent to a multi-use corridor.

As supporters of critical infrastructure enhancements and other connectivity services in Florida, as well as the M-CORES program, coalition members and local residents commended Governor DeSantis for his action and voiced their support for the new law.

Former Congressman Steve Southerland, partner of Capitol Hill Consulting Group, said: “In light of current events, expanding broadband access to rural and underserved areas across Florida has now become more important than ever, for families and businesses alike. Broadband expansion is one of the main cornerstones of the M-CORES program and this legislation dedicates significant funding for much-needed broadband infrastructure development within the corridor regions. I thank Governor DeSantis for recognizing the importance of this effort and for his commitment to improving connectivity across our state.”

Brad Swanson, president and CEO of Florida Internet & Television, said: “Florida Internet & Television applauds Governor DeSantis, President Galvano, Speaker Oliva, Senator Albritton, and Representatives Ausley and Drake for their vision of Florida’s new smart corridors and Office of Broadband. The internet and television industry is grateful to be included in the project development discussions which involve planning for future broadband deployment opportunities.”

Sandy Beach of Taylor County said: “As more and more people move to Florida, our idyllic, small town communities are a draw for many, but as a realtor, I have seen firsthand that a lack of broadband access can sometimes be a deterrent. Thanks to Governor DeSantis’ support of this legislation, we can start to improve connectivity in Florida’s rural communities and ensure

residents have access to a fundamental service many take for granted in their everyday lives, whether it be for work, education or entertainment.”

Ruth Pederson of Polk County said: “I applaud Governor DeSantis for taking action on this legislation to expand broadband access and spark much-needed development opportunities in rural Florida. With the impact the coronavirus pandemic has had on our lives and on our businesses, the improved connectivity and economic development this legislation can bring are crucial now more than ever.”

Kathryn Cimato of Lee County said: “As a longtime Lee County resident and small business owner, I recognize the value the numerous benefits of the M-CORES project would bring to our community and the opportunities it can provide for businesses like mine. Thank you, Governor DeSantis, for supporting initiatives like this that will help rural Florida to thrive into the future.”

Nina Torres of Hillsborough County said: “I thank the Governor for understanding the need for this legislation and signing it in to law today. As a mother, I value raising my children in a rural community, but I also think it is important they have access to the same educational resources as everyone else. Improving broadband access across Florida will not only help ensure all children have the tools they need to learn, but the economic growth opportunities can benefit them when they are ready to enter the workforce.”

The M-CORES program, as detailed on [the Florida M-CORES website](#), “is intended to revitalize rural communities, encourage job creation and provide regional connectivity while leveraging technology, enhancing the quality of life and public safety, and protecting the environment and natural resources. The program was signed into law by Governor Ron DeSantis on May 17, 2019.”

The three regional corridors being studied by the taskforce include the Southwest-Central Florida Connector, the Suncoast Connector and the Northern Turnpike Connector. According to the Florida M-CORES website, “the task force will summarize the results of its analysis in a final report by October 1, 2020.”

The Connecting Florida coalition is focused on infrastructure needs for Florida’s future by connecting rural communities to the world commerce and world-class destinations to tourists, providing efficient interstate and intrastate commerce and safe evacuation routes, while protecting and enhancing our precious natural resources. By supporting the creation of multi-use corridors of regional economic significance, this group of supporters will seek to support the mission to prioritize critical infrastructure enhancements and other connectivity services for the benefit of all Floridians.

For more information on Connecting Florida, please follow [@Connecting_FL](#) and like [fb.me/ConnectingFL](#).

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