

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK COUNCIL MEMBER GALE A. BREWER



CITY HALL
NEW YORK, NY 10007
TEL: 212-788-6975
FAX: 212-513-7717
www.nyccouncil.info

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Bruce Lai, (212) 788-9113
(917) 407-1600

BREWER PASSES LEGISLATION CREATING A PUBLIC BROADBAND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Legislation would create a joint mayoral and City Council broadband advisory committee to discuss bringing broadband to all New Yorkers

December 21, 2005 - On Wednesday, December 21, 2005, the New York City Council voted to pass Int. No. 625-A, sponsored by Council Member Gale A. Brewer (D-Manhattan), the Chair of the Committee on Technology in Government. This legislation passed unanimously out of the Committee on Technology in Government on Tuesday, December 20, 2005. Int. No. 625-A creates a joint public broadband commission to advise the Mayor and the City Council of New York on how the resources of City government can be used to stimulate the private market so that residents and businesses of New York City have more options for high-speed Internet access. The goal of the commission is to educate the general public about broadband and the newest communication technologies, and to give New York City residents the opportunity to comment on how the digital divide in New York City can be closed.

“New York City is one of the most wired cities in the United States, but we are falling behind our international competitors,” says Council Member Gale Brewer. “With other major U.S. cities, such as Philadelphia and San Francisco, looking to bring affordable broadband to all of its residents, New York City needs to have a very public discussion about the role of City government in ensuring that New York City has a robust telecommunications and technology infrastructure. Access to broadband and other technologies can bridge the digital divide in our schools and neighborhoods, while at the same time, promoting economic opportunity and growth for residents, nonprofits and businesses.”

"With the passage of this bill and the formation of this advisory committee, the City Council of New York City is making the first bold step in leading New York City from

being the greatest industrial city in the world into the world's greatest digital city," Andrew Rasiej, former candidate for Public Advocate of New York City, technology entrepreneur and founder of the nonprofit organization, MOUSE.

"EarthLink supports New York City's legislation to create a public broadband advisory committee," said Donald Berryman, President of EarthLink's Municipal Network Division. "Universal access to affordable high speed Internet is key to helping close the digital divide, which is not being addressed by traditional fixed broadband services, and residents will have the opportunity to join the digital community because of this action by the Mayor and City Council. As one of the world's most dynamic cities, New York City has the unique opportunity to enhance its reputation by offering its residents the widest and most diverse range of broadband services available on the planet."

"By establishing this broadband advisory committee, New York City is demonstrating its commitment to ensuring that low-cost broadband is available to all residents and businesses of this great American city," said Ron Sege, president and CEO of Tropos Networks, a major Wi-Fi networking company. "Many cities around the world are already experiencing the social and economic benefits of ubiquitous wireless broadband connectivity, and access to these services is an essential component in the growth of the community."

"Aggressively exploring its options is a 'can't lose' formula for the City. Credible threats of municipal entry often spur the private sector to improve services and lower rates, and if the private sector won't do what's needed, the City has the option of stepping forward. Either way, New Yorkers win," says Jim Baller, one of the nation's leading telecommunications lawyers.

The legislation requires that the committee hold two public hearings in every borough during its three years of existence. In addition, the Committee will issue a report yearly with recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on how municipal government can accelerate the buildout of broadband infrastructure throughout New York City.

###