



Tony Evers

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

April 3, 2026

To the Honorable Members of the Senate:

I am vetoing Senate Bill 176 in its entirety.

The bill, as amended, would create a nonrefundable tax credit on individual income and franchise taxes in an amount equal to 6.32 percent of the amount of any federal, state, Tribal, and local grant funding received for broadband expansion in Wisconsin, including any high-cost program established by the Federal Communications Commission under the Universal Service Program.

In the 21st Century, high-speed internet is part of our daily lives, and how Wisconsinites live, work, and stay connected with each other, which is why I am especially proud that no administration has done more to expand access to high-speed internet in Wisconsin than my administration has. Thanks largely due to investments I directed and my administration's efforts, more than 410,000 homes and businesses will have new or improved broadband services across Wisconsin, and this is great news for our state.

My state budget requests over the years would have enabled my administration to continue building upon this important work to reduce the digital divide and ensure more Wisconsinites can access high-speed internet. In my 2025-27 Executive Budget, I proposed \$750 million in one-time funding to support broadband expansion statewide. Additionally, in my 2025-2027 Executive Budget, I proposed a one-time \$400 million grant program for broadband expansion in remote locations in Wisconsin that are not eligible for federal funds. Unfortunately, however, Republican lawmakers rejected those investments and approved \$0 new state dollars for broadband expansion in both of our last two state budgets, jeopardizing our state's progress toward closing the digital divide and my administration's efforts to build upon our work to date. Rejecting these investments was a mistake and is also a significant motivation for why I must veto this bill today.

I am vetoing this bill in its entirety because I object to prioritizing tax incentives for telecommunications companies over making direct and meaningful investments into expanding high-speed internet for kids, families, and communities across Wisconsin. The federal Universal Service Program helps provide broadband services to rural, insular, and high-cost areas and is a useful tool to help telecommunications companies expand telephone and internet service coverage to communities that would not otherwise have access. We need as much help as we can get from our partners in the private sector to ensure affordable, high-speed internet is a reality for every Wisconsinite, regardless of where they live.

However, this bill does not create a sustainable solution for funding or implementing high-speed internet expansion efforts, instead opting for a temporary tax credit that will benefit telecommunications companies and their owners instead of Wisconsin's working families. Taxpayer



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resources are finite, and we should focus on efforts to further develop and strengthen high-speed internet infrastructure that gives Wisconsin taxpayers the biggest bang for their buck while moving our state into the 21st Century.

We should not give tax credits to telecommunications companies on broadband expansion grant funds that could instead be invested in efforts to expand high-speed internet in communities across our state.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tony Evers".

Tony Evers
Governor