

**Fierce Cable
Cable
infiltration into
U.S. wireless
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**Poynter
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era, trusty C-
SPAN offers
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**DSL Reports
Sources:
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Amazon Will
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**New York Times
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**Digiday
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"How can asphalt save the environment?" That's a question Verizon has posed on its website promoting Internet of Things (IoT) services. Perhaps a better question, though, is "What does Verizon have to do with asphalt?" As it turns out, the wireless provider thinks getting involved in smart-city construction has a lot of upside, and if cities are known for anything, it's asphalt.

If you live in the city, you likely have to deal with traffic. That's often accompanied by poor air quality



from automobile emissions. According to Verizon, Americans spend over 8 billion hours a year stuck in traffic. And that's not just a waste of time, as a car that idles an hour a day emits 10 pounds of carbon dioxide during the

course of a week.

The largest wireless provider in the U.S. thinks it has a solution. The company is embedding sensors into the asphalt on city roads, pairing them with cameras on traffic lights, and connecting the devices to its wireless network to analyze traffic. That data can then be used to help a city adjust traffic light timing and make other transportation infrastructure changes to optimize the flow of traffic.

Verizon thinks that its "smart asphalt" has the potential to significantly reduce fossil fuel emissions. It could also save us time by reducing the amount of traffic stops by up to 44%, according to the company, and save a collective \$160 billion a year from costs related to traffic congestion. Verizon's **IoT business** is still a small segment, with over \$220 million in sales last quarter compared to \$31.7 billion in total revenue. The company has been growing that segment by double digits, though, as wireless networks have become increasingly important to other services outside of mobile phones.

Sacramento, Calif., is one place where Verizon is implementing these new services. The sensors have been placed in city streets and cameras have been installed to help analyze traffic in the state capital, and Verizon announced over the summer of 2017 that it would be spending \$100 million on infrastructure to provide Wi-Fi in parks and expand its fiber optic network. Sacramento will also be one of a handful of cities in which Verizon starts offering 5G network access in 2018. 5G will be more than faster data for smartphones; the aim is for the next-gen network to be a legitimate contender against broadband internet providers for homes and businesses. The technology could also be instrumental in enabling the use of self-driving vehicles, remote healthcare, and smart-city initiatives like internet-connected asphalt.

It is still early on in the IoT movement, and Verizon's "smart asphalt" is but one example of how new technology is being implemented in new ways. As Wi-Fi availability expands and network reliability and speeds increase, expect the internet and connection-enabling technology to become a more integral part of our lives. For Verizon, that means more uses for its telecom network, which is

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beginning to look more like an internet service provider than anything. If the company is able to demonstrate success in its new smart-city and 5G initiatives, expect its IoT division to grow exponentially and become an increasingly important segment of the overall business. – *Motley Fool*

Now that congressional Republicans and President Donald Trump have reduced the federal corporate income tax rate by 40 percent, state lawmakers should take it as a cue to reform the state government's obsolete tax code.

The tax rate reduction from 35 percent to 21 percent will save corporations about \$1 trillion over 10 years. Meanwhile, Republican majorities in the state Legislature steadfastly refuse to enact two major corporate tax reforms that not only would help the state government resolve its systemic deficit — estimated to be about \$1 billion by the close of the current fiscal year June 30 — but more fairly distribute the tax burden. Pennsylvania has a 9.9 percent corporate tax rate, which companies and politicians alike lament as being burdensome, even though relatively few companies, especially big ones, actually pay that rate.

Lawmakers continue to maintain a tax evasion scheme known as the Delaware loophole. Many large corporations evade tax liability in Pennsylvania, using the loophole to report their income through corporate shells in low-tax or no-tax states such as Delaware. Lawmakers repeatedly have refused to act on proposals to close that loophole. But now that corporations will be awash in cash due to the 40 percent reduction in federal tax liability, it's time for legislators to close the state's door to corporate tax evasion.

The Legislature should reduce the state corporate tax rate by about a third, which would make the state more competitive and provide a break to mostly smaller companies that actually pay the tax. And, it should require what's called combined reporting by companies that now operate under the Delaware loophole, to ensure that they pay taxes on revenue generated here.

The massive federal tax cut also applies, of course, to companies in the natural gas industry. Barclays, the big investment bank, estimated Thursday that the tax reduction alone will increase by 5 percent the share prices of major gas and oil companies, equivalent to a \$1-per-barrel increase in oil prices. And the bill includes another massive break, allowing drillers to expense 100 percent of their capital costs over five years.

Lawmakers' excuses for coddling the gas industry always have been bogus. The industry is well-established and profitable. Its markets are growing, with substantial government help. The federal tax breaks mean there is even less reason for the Legislature not to impose a fair tax on gas extraction. Imposing one finally would end Pennsylvania's foolish, politically based status as the only gas-drilling state not to have a severance tax. – *Wilkes-Barre Citizens' Voice* editorial

