

Testimony of Robert Perry, Mad River Valley TV
Re: FY2024 budget

Good afternoon. My name is Rob Perry and I am the Executive Director of the Mad River Valley Public Access TV Station. Our station serves the towns of Warren, Waitsfield, Fayston, and Moretown. I'm here to ask that you support the Vermont Access Network – the 24 community media (PEG) centers with a one-time appropriation of \$1 million in fiscal 24. This would be the third round of funding to serve as a bridge to replace the declining support from our cable networks.

MRVTV's primary function is to connect our broad community with each other, our schools, our challenges and our town and state governments. We provide access to municipal meetings including Select boards, the Harwood school board, planning commissions, development review boards and Valley wide planning and recreation districts. We also show local school events including sports and Vermont wide programming of interest to our viewers.

Recently we've live streamed concerts and events from our schools which has increased access to these events for the local community as well as far flung family members. Over the last year, some of the most attended live broadcasts have included:

- Harwood Jazz concert
- Harwood Winter concert
- Forum for candidates for state representative

All content is available to Waitsfield Cable subscribers and is streamed from our website for access by non-cable subscribers.

However, our station faces significant challenges going forward. Cord cutting is dramatically reducing our primary funding source, the mandated grant from Waitsfield cable. This is 90% of our income and it is declining at more than 5% per year. Despite reductions in costs MRVTV has had negative operating income in the past two years. The past grants from the state have enabled us to continue serving our community. Thank you for your support,.

Again, I ask that you support VAN's request for \$1 million for bridge funding for public access TV stations across Vermont. It is essential to

keep stations working in the communities to connect our broadly dispersed communities.

Thank you.