

**From:** "Edee Selectboard" <[edee.edwards.halifax.selectbd@gmail.com](mailto:edee.edwards.halifax.selectbd@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** February 5, 2014 at 11:05:18 PM EST  
**To:** "Ann Manwaring" <[sandbox@sover.net](mailto:sandbox@sover.net)>  
**Subject:** H.693 and High Speed Internet in Halifax

Dear Representative Ann Manwaring:

I am writing in the hopes of proposing an amendment on H.693, which the House Commerce and Economic Development Committee plans to take up on Friday ([www.leg.state.vt.us/docs/2014/bills/Intro/H-693.pdf](http://www.leg.state.vt.us/docs/2014/bills/Intro/H-693.pdf)) Subject: Public Service; Telecommunications; Repeal of Sunset Provisions. I would like to see the sunset provisions be extended for one or two years, rather than eliminated.

I also ask you to note that my email address is changing because at my house I now have high speed Internet. But I can't celebrate.

Had I known in 2005 that my plan to escape the big city and live with purpose in this small town of Halifax would result in almost 9 years with nothing but lurching waits on the Internet costing \$140/month for 3 MBS service, plus the biennial investments of \$500 or more in satellite equipment, I would have chosen a different path to fulfillment. Now I'm here—sort of.

Less than 2 hours after my DSL was set up, I was talking to another Halifax resident, who said she'd lost her job because her Boston-area employer was no longer willing to pay for her Vermont office space. She cannot telecommute because she can't get high speed Internet. She knows she will have difficulty selling her house and/or will take a financial hit if she can sell it, because it lacks high speed. She's figuring out the rounds of which libraries & cafes are open on which days, so she can apply for jobs. Vendors have asked her to stop calling, as there is no scheduled date for service to her home.

You may be keeping track of our VTEL tower proposal. As the town of Halifax embarks on its journey down the regulatory path with the proposal of a wireless broadband communication monopole, we face the inevitable challenges:

- never a perfect site;
- never the right amounts of time and input into the process;
- our sense that we lack control over the vendor-partners and our own, imperfect (yet best-in-the-world) government; and
- the discord of asking some neighbors to bear a possible intrusion so that most of us may have access to this vital infrastructure.

According to *Hills and Hollows: History of Halifax, Volume 2, (2013)*, Halifax electricity was turned on in a ceremony on September 26, 1942. Over 200 people attended. The slow trickle of high speed into various parts of town may preclude another such large gathering. I'm not planning one just yet. But as a Selectboard member, I can't simply say, "I got mine," while others continue the wait. We have yet another petition of 40+ names of people who think the local government

can somehow help get private firms to invest to bring expensive infrastructure into the village.

VLCT has noted that H.693 removes the July 1, 2014 deadline after which the streamlined process of using the Public Service Board in lieu of local zoning was to expire. Towns like Halifax will suffer even longer waits for this vital infrastructure if VTEL's soon-to-be-sent application to erect a monopole in Halifax is delayed.

In response to concerns from our Planning/Zoning Board, I am in favor of having a sunset clause on this process—but in my opinion, we aren't there yet, in my town, at least. While the State, by virtue of the original legislation, has supported the deployment of high-speed wireless broadband and cellular service using federal dollars, I feel we need at one more year, or maybe two, of these streamlined processes during which we might ensure ALL Vermonters will have high speed Internet options. And after that, yes, it will be worth having towns take back a greater measure of local control—and local responsibility—in siting these facilities.

Writing to you was discussed by the Halifax Selectboard as a whole, but we decided to respond individually. I hope some our perspectives can help shape this into better legislation.

Thank you so much for your service to our community (and the cheerleading that has helped us get this far).

Sincerely,

Edee

Edee Edwards, Halifax Selectboard Chair, 802-368-7063  
[edee.edwards.halifax.selectbd@gmail.com](mailto:edee.edwards.halifax.selectbd@gmail.com)