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H.786

Introduced by Representatives Canfield of Fair Haven, Berry of Manchester,  
Burditt of West Rutland, Christie of Hartford, Eastman of  
Orwell, Emmons of Springfield, Gage of Rutland City, Hebert  
of Vernon, Lewis of Berlin, McFaun of Barre Town, Miller of  
Shaftsbury, Morris of Bennington, Morrissey of Bennington,  
Ram of Burlington, Shaw of Pittsford, Sibilia of Dover, Strong  
of Albany, Tate of Mendon, Till of Jericho, and Walz of  
Barre City

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Utilities; telecommunications; news service; blind and visually  
impaired; Vermont Universal Service Fund

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to allocate  
monies from the Vermont Universal Service Fund to support a  
telecommunications news service for individuals who are blind or visually  
impaired or otherwise unable to read such printed materials.

An act relating to the Vermont Universal Service Fund and a  
telecommunications news service for individuals who are blind or visually  
impaired

1 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

2 Sec. 1. 30 V.S.A. § 7511 is amended to read:

3 § 7511. DISTRIBUTION GENERALLY

4 (a)(1) As directed by the Commissioner of Public Service, funds collected  
5 by the fiscal agent, and interest accruing thereon, shall be distributed as  
6 follows:

7 (A) to pay costs payable to the fiscal agent under its contract with the  
8 Commissioner;

9 (B) to support the Vermont telecommunications relay service in the  
10 manner provided by section 7512 of this title;

11 (C) to support the Vermont Lifeline program in the manner provided  
12 by section 7513 of this title;

13 (D) to support Enhanced-911 services in the manner provided by  
14 section 7514 of this title; ~~and~~

15 (E) to support a telecommunications information and news service in  
16 the manner provided by section 7512a of this title; and

17 (F) to support the Connectivity Fund established in section 7516 of  
18 this title; and

19 (2) for fiscal year 2016 only, any personnel or administrative costs  
20 associated with the Connectivity Initiative shall come from the Connectivity

1 Fund, as determined by the Commissioner in consultation with the  
2 Connectivity Board.

3 (b) If insufficient funds exist to support all of the purposes contained in  
4 subsection (a) of this section, the Commissioner shall allocate the available  
5 funds, giving priority in the order listed in subsection (a).

6 Sec. 2. 30 V.S.A. § 7512a is added to read:

7 § 7512a. TELECOMMUNICATIONS NEWS SERVICE

8 The fiscal agent shall make distributions to the State Treasurer for a  
9 telecommunications information and news service that provides access to  
10 existing newspapers and other printed materials for individuals who are blind,  
11 visually impaired, or otherwise unable to read such printed materials. The  
12 amount of the transfer shall be determined by the Commissioner of Public  
13 Service as the amount reasonably necessary to pay the costs of a contract  
14 administered by the Department of Public Service.

15 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

16 This act shall take effect on passage.