

1 H.347

2 Introduced by Representatives Sibia of Dover, Carr of Brandon,
3 Chesnut-Tangerman of Middletown Springs, Forguites of
4 Springfield, LaLonde of South Burlington, McCormack of
5 Burlington, Parent of St. Albans Town, and Yantachka of
6 Charlotte

7 Referred to Committee on

8 Date:

9 Subject: Telecommunications; plan; surveys and assessments

10 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to enhance the
11 survey and assessment requirements necessary for preparation of the State
12 Telecommunications Plan.

13 An act relating to the State Telecommunications Plan

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

15 Sec. 1. 30 V.S.A. § 202d is amended to read:

16 § 202d. TELECOMMUNICATIONS PLAN

17 (a) The Department of Public Service shall constitute the responsible
18 planning agency of the State for the purpose of obtaining for all consumers in
19 the State stable and predictable rates and a technologically advanced
20 telecommunications network serving all service areas in the State. The

1 Department shall be responsible for the provision of plans for meeting
2 emerging trends related to telecommunications technology, markets, financing,
3 and competition.

4 (b) The Department shall prepare a Telecommunications Plan for the State.
5 The Department of Innovation and Information, the Agency of Commerce and
6 Community Development, and the Agency of Transportation shall assist the
7 Department in preparing the Plan. The Plan shall be for a 10-year period and
8 shall serve as a basis for State telecommunications policy. Prior to preparing
9 the Plan, the Department shall prepare:

10 (1) ~~an~~ An overview, looking 10 years ahead, of future requirements for
11 telecommunications services, considering services needed for economic
12 development, technological advances, and other trends and factors which, as
13 determined by the Department of Public Service, will significantly affect State
14 telecommunications policy and programs;

15 (2) ~~a survey~~ One or more surveys of Vermont residents and businesses,
16 conducted in cooperation with the Agency of Commerce and Community
17 Development to determine what telecommunications services are needed now
18 and in the succeeding ~~ten~~ 10 years, generally, and with respect to the following
19 specific sectors in Vermont;

20 (A) the educational sector, with input from the Secretary of
21 Education;

1 (B) the health care and human services sectors, with input from the
2 Commissioner of Health and the Secretary of Human Services;

3 (C) the public safety sector, with input from the Commissioner of
4 Public Safety and the Executive Director of the Enhanced 911 Board; and

5 (D) the workforce training and development sectors, with input from
6 the Commissioner of Labor.

7 (3) ~~an~~ An assessment of the current state of telecommunications
8 infrastructure;

9 (4) ~~an~~ An assessment, conducted in cooperation with the Department of
10 Innovation and Information and the Agency of Transportation, of the current
11 State telecommunications system and evaluation of alternative proposals for
12 upgrading the system to provide the best available and affordable technology
13 for use by government; ~~and.~~

14 (5) ~~an~~ An assessment of the state of telecommunications networks and
15 services in Vermont relative to other states, including price comparisons for
16 key services and comparisons of the state of technology deployment.

17 (c) In developing the Plan, the Department shall take into account the State
18 telecommunications policies and goals of section 202c of this title.

19 (d) In establishing plans, public hearings shall be held and the Department
20 shall consult with members of the public, representatives of
21 telecommunications utilities with a certificate of public good, other providers,

1 including the Vermont Electric Power Co., Inc. (VELCO), and other interested
2 State agencies, particularly the Agency of Commerce and Community
3 Development, the Agency of Transportation, and the Department of Innovation
4 and Information, whose views shall be considered in preparation of the Plan.

5 To the extent necessary, the Department shall include in the Plan surveys to
6 determine existing, needed, and desirable plant improvements and extensions,
7 access and coordination between telecommunications providers, methods of
8 operations, and any change that will produce better service or reduce costs. To
9 this end, the Department may require the submission of data by each company
10 subject to supervision by the Public Service Board.

11 (e) Before adopting a Plan, the Department shall conduct public hearings
12 on a final draft and shall consider the testimony presented at such hearings in
13 preparing the final Plan. At least one hearing shall be held jointly with
14 Committees of the General Assembly designated by the General Assembly for
15 this purpose. The Plan shall be adopted by September 1, 2014, and then
16 reviewed and updated as provided in subsection (f) of this section.

17 (f) The Department, from time to time, but in no event less than every three
18 years, shall institute proceedings to review the Plan and make revisions, where
19 necessary. The three-year major review shall be made according to the
20 procedures established in this section for initial adoption of the Plan. For good
21 cause or upon request by a joint resolution passed by the General Assembly, an

1 interim review and revision of any section of the Plan may be made after
2 conducting public hearings on the interim revision. At least one hearing shall
3 be held jointly with Committees of the General Assembly designated by the
4 General Assembly for this purpose.

5 (g) The Department shall review and update the minimum technical service
6 characteristic objectives not less than every three years beginning in 2017. In
7 the event such review is conducted separately from an update of the Plan, the
8 Department shall issue revised minimum technical service characteristic
9 objectives as an amendment to the Plan.

10 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

11 This act shall take effect on passage.