

State of Vermont

House of Representatives



Montpelier, Vermont

House Resolution

H.R. 21

House resolution urging the Department of Public Service and the Governor to ensure that those areas the CoverageCo micro-cell network was intended to serve have access to cellular services, including E-911

Offered by: Representatives Sibilio of Dover, Parent of St. Albans Town, Briglin of Thetford, Burke of Brattleboro, Carr of Brandon, Chesnut-Tangerman of Middletown Springs, Cina of Burlington, Colburn of Burlington, Conlon of Cornwall, Conquest of Newbury, Copeland-Hanzas of Bradford, Deen of Westminster, Forguites of Springfield, Gannon of Wilmington, Gonzalez of Winooski, Haas of Rochester, Hebert of Vernon, Hill of Wolcott, Hooper of Randolph, Jickling of Randolph, Keefe of Manchester, Keenan of St. Albans City, Kimbell of Woodstock, Krowinski of Burlington, Lefebvre of Newark, Long of Newfane, Masland of Thetford, McCormack of Burlington, Mrowicki of Putney, Noyes of Wolcott, Pajala of Londonderry, Partridge of Windham, Read of Fayston, Scheu of Middlebury, Toleno of Brattleboro, Trieber of Rockingham, Weed of Enosburgh, Yantachka of Charlotte, and Young of Glover

Whereas, the geographic isolation and small populations of a number of Vermont's rural towns have dissuaded the major cellular providers from constructing the necessary infrastructure to offer reliable service, and

Whereas, as a result of communications problems following Tropical Storm Irene, the Vermont Telecommunications Authority entered into a contract with Vanu and its subsidiary, CoverageCo, to operate a network of roadway micro-cells in selected towns, and

Whereas, these micro-cells serve as a 2G network that relays a signal to cooperating cellular phone companies providing subscriber service, and

Whereas, the geographically dispersed towns that host these micro-cells are Brighton, Canaan, Chelsea, Fairlee, Granville, Groton, Halifax, Hancock, Jamaica, Middlebury, Newfane, Norton, Readsboro, Ripton, Roxbury, Ryegate, Strafford, Thetford, Topsham, Townshend, Vershire, Washington, Whitingham, Wilmington, Wolcott, and Woodstock, and

Whereas, this 2G network, while still incomplete and problematic, nevertheless has brought cell phone service, including the ability to call E-911, to areas of the State previously lacking cellular service, and

Whereas, Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital in Townshend gained cellular service from this micro-cell network, and

Whereas, due to economic constraints, CoverageCo intends to cease operations, possibly as early as Friday, March 23, 2018, and

Whereas, the leadership of Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital has expressed alarm at becoming Vermont's only hospital without cellular service, and

Whereas, the Department of Public Service has attempted to find an alternative company to operate and complete the CoverageCo network, and

Whereas, for reasons of public health, safety, and commerce, access to reliable cellular service and especially to E-911 is essential, now therefore be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives:

That this legislative body urges the Department of Public Service and the Governor to ensure that those areas the CoverageCo micro-cell network was intended to serve have access to cellular services, including E-911, and be it further

Resolved: That the Clerk of the House be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Governor Philip Scott and to Commissioner of Public Service June Tierney.