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H.581

Introduced by Representatives Sibia of Dover, Young of Glover, Bock of  
Chester, Carr of Brandon, Chesnut-Tangerman of Middletown  
Springs, Conlon of Cornwall, Conquest of Newbury, Forguites  
of Springfield, Gannon of Wilmington, Haas of Rochester,  
Harrison of Chittenden, Jickling of Randolph, Kimbell of  
Woodstock, McCormack of Burlington, McCoy of Poultney,  
Pajala of Londonderry, Parent of St. Albans Town, Quimby of  
Concord, Scheu of Middlebury, and Yantachka of Charlotte

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Telecommunications; Connectivity Initiative; infrastructure grants

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to restrict  
Connectivity Initiative grants to one-time infrastructure projects, not ongoing  
operational expenses.

An act relating to Connectivity Initiative grant eligibility

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

2 Sec. 1. 30 V.S.A. § 7515b is amended to read:

3 § 7515b. CONNECTIVITY INITIATIVE

4 (a) The purpose of the Connectivity Initiative is to provide each service  
5 location in Vermont access to Internet service that is capable of speeds of at  
6 least 10 Mbps download and 1 Mbps upload, or the FCC speed requirements  
7 established under Connect America Fund Phase II, whichever is higher,  
8 beginning with locations not served as of December 31, 2013 according to the  
9 minimum technical service characteristic objectives applicable at that time.  
10 Within this category of service locations, priority shall be given first to  
11 unserved and then to underserved locations. As used in this section,  
12 “unserved” means a location having access to only satellite or dial-up Internet  
13 service and “underserved” means a location having access to Internet service  
14 with speeds that exceed satellite and dial-up speeds but are less than 4 Mbps  
15 download and 1 Mbps upload. Any new services funded in whole or in part by  
16 monies from this Initiative shall be capable of being continuously upgraded to  
17 reflect the best available, most economically feasible service capabilities.

18 (b) The Department of Public Service shall publish annually a list of census  
19 blocks eligible for funding based on the Department’s most recent broadband  
20 mapping data. The Department annually shall solicit proposals from service  
21 providers to deploy broadband to eligible census blocks. Funding shall be

1 available for one-time infrastructure projects only, not for ongoing operating  
2 expenses. The Department shall give priority to proposals that reflect the  
3 lowest cost of providing services to unserved and underserved locations;  
4 however, the Department also shall consider:

5 (1) the proposed data transfer rates and other data transmission  
6 characteristics of services that would be available to consumers;

7 (2) the price to consumers of services;

8 (3) the proposed cost to consumers of any new construction, equipment  
9 installation service, or facility required to obtain service;

10 (4) whether the proposal would use the best available technology that is  
11 economically feasible;

12 (5) the availability of service of comparable quality and speed; and

13 (6) the objectives of the State's Telecommunications Plan.

14 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

15 This act shall take effect on passage.