
This act summary is provided for the convenience of the public and members of the General Assembly. It is intended to provide a general summary of the act and may not be exhaustive. It has been prepared by the staff of the Office of Legislative Council without input from members of the General Assembly. It is not intended to aid in the interpretation of legislation or to serve as a source of legislative intent.

Act No. 79 (H.513). Telecommunications; broadband; E-911; PEG access television

An act relating to broadband deployment throughout Vermont

This act amends existing law and establishes new programs related to the deployment of broadband service in Vermont. For example, it increases the Universal Service Rate of Charge by four-tenths of one percent and uses the additional revenue raised to fund a new position within the Department of Public Service as well as grants through the Connectivity Initiative, it increases the speed requirements for eligibility for funding through both the High-Cost Program and the Connectivity Initiative to 25/3 Mbps, it changes the Vermont Universal Service Fund Rate of Charge collection method applicable to prepaid wireless telecommunications service, it establishes the Broadband Innovation Grant Program within the Department of Public Service, it requires the Department of Public Service to study the feasibility of electric companies providing broadband service using electric company infrastructure, it repeals the prohibition on electric cooperatives receiving federal funds for unregulated activities, it allows municipalities to enter into public-private partnerships with private Internet service providers, it establishes the Broadband Expansion Loan Program within the Vermont Economic Development Authority, it amends Vermont's pole-attachment rule, it adds additional data and analysis requirements applicable to the State's 10-year Telecommunications Plan and specifies that a new plan shall be adopted every three years, it requires the Commissioner of Health to prepare a report on the possible health consequences from exposure to the radio frequency fields produced by wireless technologies, it requires the E-911 Board to adopt protocols for the reporting of outages that may disrupt the availability of E-911 service, it requires the Public Utility Commission to complete by a date certain its workshop concerning the pole-rental calculation and its workshop concerning backup-power obligations, it establishes the PEG Access Study Committee, and it authorizes the Commissioner of Public Service to provide financial and technical support to municipalities seeking to obtain or use State-owned 2G microcells.

Multiple effective dates, beginning June 20, 2019