

**No. R-65. House concurrent resolution recognizing the importance of Public, Educational, and Government Access cable television channels and their associated Community Media Access Centers.**

(H.C.R.53)

Offered by: Representative McCarthy of St. Albans City

Whereas, the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984, Pub.L. No. 98-549, mandated that the nation's cable television systems provide Public, Educational, and Government Access (PEG Access) channels, and

Whereas, in Vermont, the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) is the exclusive licensing authority for cable television systems and has adopted PUC Rule 8.400 to implement this federal statutory mandate, and

Whereas, PEG Access channels provide the opportunity for community members to produce local programming, including coverage of electoral, governmental, and political events and offer a broad range of citizen viewpoints on matters of public policy, and

Whereas, the role of PEG Access channels is a contemporary version of the right set forth in Chapter I, Article 13 of the Vermont Constitution, which states that "the people have a right to freedom of speech, and of writing and publishing their sentiments, concerning the transactions of government," and

Whereas, in Vermont, 25 Community Media Access Centers (CMACs) operate more than 80 local channels that annually produce over 18,000 hours of cable television programming, and

Whereas, the CMACs provide 101 jobs, and the 25 centers have coalesced through the Vermont Access Network to exchange ideas, coordinate administrative and production projects, and educate Vermonters on the importance of PEG Access television for an informed citizenry, and

Whereas, through the technical facilities of the CMACs, local organizations and individuals create cablecasts that tell their own special stories, share unique ideas, and present a menu of television programs not accessible elsewhere, and

Whereas, the continuing operation of the CMACs provides a vital democratic forum, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly recognizes the importance of Public, Educational, and Government Access cable television channels and their associated Community Media Access Centers, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Vermont Access Network and to Northwest Access TV.