

1 S.91

2 Introduced by Senators Bray, Balint, Campion, Clarkson, MacDonald, Pollina
3 and Sirotkin

4 Referred to Committee on

5 Date:

6 Subject: Utilities; electric companies; broadband Internet access service; study

7 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require the
8 Commissioner of Public Service to study the feasibility of electric companies
9 providing broadband Internet access service using electric distribution and
10 transmission infrastructure.

11 An act relating to electric companies and broadband Internet access service

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

13 Sec. 1. STUDY; FEASIBILITY OF ELECTRIC COMPANIES OFFERING

14 BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS SERVICE IN VERMONT

15 (a) The Commissioner of Public Service shall study the feasibility of
16 Vermont electric companies providing broadband Internet access service
17 (BIAS) using electric distribution and transmission infrastructure. Among
18 other things, a feasibility determination shall address the maturity of the
19 technology, the compatibility of BIAS with existing electric service, the
20 financial investment necessary to undertake the provision of BIAS,

1 identification of the unserved and underserved areas of the State where the
2 provision of BIAS by an electric company appears feasible, the impact on
3 electric rates, and the financial risk to electric companies.

4 (b) In performing the feasibility study required by this section, the
5 Commissioner, in consultation with the Public Utility Commission, shall
6 consider regulatory barriers to the provision of BIAS by electric companies,
7 and shall develop legislative proposals to address those barriers. In addition,
8 the Commissioner, in collaboration with electric company representatives,
9 shall evaluate whether it is in the public interest and also in the interest of
10 electric companies for electric companies to:

11 (1) make improvements to the distribution grid in furtherance of
12 providing BIAS in conjunction with electric distribution grid transformation
13 projects;

14 (2) operate BIAS using electric distribution and transmission
15 infrastructure to provide such service to unserved and underserved areas of the
16 State; and

17 (3) permit a commercial entity to lease utility capacity to provide BIAS
18 to unserved and underserved areas of the State.

19 (c) As used in this section, “unserved” means a location having access to
20 Internet service with speeds less than 10 Mbps download and 1 Mbps upload,
21 and “underserved” means a location having access to Internet service with

1 speeds greater than 10 Mbps download and 1 Mbps upload and less than
2 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload.

3 (d) The Commissioner shall report the feasibility findings and
4 recommendations required by this section to the Senate Committee on Finance
5 and to the House Committee on Energy and Technology on or before
6 December 1, 2019.

7 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

8 This act shall take effect on passage.