

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Vermont's FY20 Budget. I am Virginia Holiman, and have been on the Board ~~for~~^{of} Northwest Access TV here in St. Albans for the past 6 years.

We serve the towns, schools and residents of Franklin County, from St. Albans to Highgate and Richford to Bakersfield. A very rural area of Vermont.

We are proud to be part of a statewide organization known as Vermont Access Network which represents 25 community media centers across the state, operating more than 80 public, educational and government (PEG) access channels.

Collectively, with members of our communities, we generate 18,000 hours of local programs each year, and utilize more than \$8 million in cable subscriber fees to provide community-based programming (including municipal meetings and election coverage, which you are likely familiar with), supplement public education with media literacy and school sports coverage, and provide an open, free speech forum.

The State of Vermont has advanced PEG access as a public good for the past 35 years. There now are several threats facing the continued open access of these PEG channels and community media centers that knit our state together. These threats diminish both the state's authority to manage its public right-of-ways (where cable lines run) and the vibrant local media network that serves communities across Vermont.