

**From:** Andrew Gilbert <andy@agilbert.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 10, 2020 10:52 AM  
**To:** Faith Brown <FBrown@leg.state.vt.us>  
**Subject:** [External] COVID-19 Connectivity Hearing Question

[External]

I have been a member of CVFiber CUD nearly since its inception. The efforts and progress have been real and noteworthy, and the commitment of the members to solving this issue is truly inspiring. However, I have developed a very strong concern that CUD's are NOT a viable approach to solving this issue. And moreover assuming they are a good approach is delaying real action, creating false hope and in some sense allowing others, i.e. the State itself, the legislature, the Federal government and incumbent LEC's and wireless providers to avoid responsibility.

The primary issues with CUD's include:

1. It's all volunteers. And despite having some very professional and dedicated people, volunteers are not adequate to solve the issue in a timely and effective manner.
2. They lack funding. Desperately so. And since a CUD per se is not an ISP it is difficult to even qualify / compete for some funding sources.
3. There are no executive or operational resources to conduct day to day activities. We can't even retain or re-numerate a clerk easily!
4. The board is technically a public oversight body, but in reality because of no \$\$ and lack of an operating partner many members have to tackle issues directly. This is problematic in a number of ways. Members are not technicians, network engineers, financial accountants except by chance. And activities and contributions they provide are likely not institutionalized and retained. A change in the composition of the board can have a major impact on operational capability. It is NOT the right way to do this.
5. Having a number of independent CUD's is an uncoordinated and inefficient approach, and likely to lead to non-optimal resource usage, overbuild, funding competition, poor scale, and even more confusion.

We NEED TO DO BETTER. A real plan. I just recently had an email exchange with a local resident frustrated by the problem. This snippet summarizes everything.

"My husband and I are around 70 and both in fading health. Our daughter is living with us currently but cannot work remotely here or continue to help us with such unreliable internet service.

We both have neurodegenerative diseases so our future is not bright. With this uncertainty I shouldn't make financial commitments I guess but please keep me updated as the project evolves."

I have a full time job. I have put two years of volunteer time into CVFiber. And yeh we are getting somewhere but it's not fast enough and it's not enough period. And I shouldn't be the one on the hook here to answer to situations like this. That is on you, the legislature and the executive to take more seriously.

Respectfully

Andrew Gilbert  
Cabot Delegate CVFiber  
(Speaking on behalf of myself - not the board)