

September 10, 2020

To: Members of House Energy and Technology Committee

RE: COVID Emergency Funding Proposal for Pole Harvesting

This testimony is being provided to the Committee from my dual capacities. First representing the Town of Calais to CVFiber and Co-Chair of its Business Development Committee and second, my long history working for and with Vermont's GIS system.

CVFiber will use the results of this emergency funding to accelerate and provide the essential information necessary for the pre-construction engineering and design work for our Phase I projects. Phase I includes six separate projects totally 350 miles of service to the most in needed locations in our 20 communities. The pole harvesting project would advance the construction of fiber to these premises.

Data collection is a tedious but necessary endeavor. I have reviewed the unsolicited proposal concept by made by Fulcrum/Honey Bear Analytics to use highly accurate, rapid data collection technology that would enable Vermont's CUD's to quickly advance their projects, especially ours. This approach is sound and would definitely help accelerate the construction of broadband networks.

The resultant pole inventory and GIS application would allow Vermont's distribution utilities and CUD's to easily maintain the information over time. As fiber is attached to poles, all users would know where fiber exists. The ongoing maintenance function is a critical need for growing businesses and maintaining our electric grid. This information could also inform the Public Utilities Commission and Department of Public Service in their oversight functions. In addition to the advanced technology proposed for data collection Honey Bear Analytics has built award winning GIS inventory applications that make it easy for users to update and produce reports for two communities in Maine

This is one of the last statewide databases missing from Vermont's extensive GIS data resources. It was listed as high priority in the 1988 Vermont GIS Implementation Plan. At that time VCGI (OGIS) received funding from a portion of the 1/2 percent property transfer tax to build the essential databases. The legislature took this away in ~1991, So reduced amounts of funding was the rule for the next 25+ years.

CVFiber has been developing a formal partnership with Washington Electric Coop. I know that the information from this effort would help them update their records. They are interested to find out whether that attachments to their poles they are unaware of. As a result, they believe that they may be losing pole attachment rental fees.

This a great opportunity to meet the desperate needs for high speed broadband.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

David Healy