

From: Nishi, Roger <rnishi@corp.wcvr.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2020 4:28 PM
To: Ann Cummings <ACUMMINGS@leg.state.vt.us>
Cc: Faith Brown <FBrown@leg.state.vt.us>
Subject: [External] Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom Initiatives

[External]

Senator Cummings,

I listened in on today's meeting on broadband and educational issues. Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom signed on to the Keep Americans Connected Pledge and is not disconnecting any residence or business as directed by the Vermont legislature. We also sent letters to both Senator Sanders and Senator Leahy asking them to sign on to the "Keeping Critical Connections Act". Congressman Welch introduced the House version of the bill. The industry is looking for this to be included in the next round of COVID-19 funding. See email below to Senator Leahy's office.

Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom is doing the following:

- **Community Wi-Fi:** Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom has various locations where Community Wi-Fi is available to keep our communities connected. Free Wi-Fi is available at these locations from a parked car. Please remember to always practice social distancing while using the Community Wi-Fi to keep everyone in our community safe. A complete list is available here: <https://www.wcvr.com/news/community-wi-fi-locations/>
- **Connecting Students** – We understand that high-speed Internet access is a critical resource for online learning. Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom is working with our local schools to ensure those who don't currently have Internet access and Wi-Fi at their homes are connected at no cost.
- **Signing The Pledge** – Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom has signed on to the FCC's Pledge to Keep American's Connected. As such, we will...
 - not terminate service to any residential or business customers because of their inability to pay their bills due to the disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic;
 - waive any late fees that any residential or small business customers incur because of their economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic; and
 - open its Wi-Fi hotspots to any American who needs them.

I know that all of the Independent have similar initiatives during this very difficult time.

Roger

Roger Nishi
Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom
PO Box 9

Waitsfield, VT 05673
802-496-8336 – Desk
rnishi@corp.wcvt.com

From: Nishi, Roger
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2020 6:51 PM
To: 'Chabot, Erica (Leahy)' <Erica_Chabot@leahy.senate.gov>
Cc: Dowd, John (Leahy) <John_Dowd@leahy.senate.gov>
Subject: Co-Sponsoring of S.3569, Keeping Critical Connections Act

Erica,

I am writing to request that Senator Leahy co-sponsor S. 3569, the [Keeping Critical Connections Act](#), introduced on March 23 by Senators Amy Klobuchar and Kevin Cramer. This bill would help ensure that smaller broadband operators like Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom can sustain essential broadband connections for customers unable to pay their bills due to a loss or reduction in income related to the COVID-19 crisis. It will also allow us to offer free service or broadband upgrades to households with students in need of distance learning capability. Stated again, in a simpler way, **this bill will help us recover the cost of providing service to low income customers that are unable to pay and for free service for students without a broadband connection.**

This is so important that we are doing this now, not knowing if we will recoup any of our cost of keeping fellow Vermonter connected. I cannot stress the importance of being connected, especially in times of crisis like we are experiencing now.

Further, it would be great if you could join in your support with Representative Peter Welch who introduced the House bill on March 25 with Roger Marshall.

Please contact April Jones in Senator Klobuchar's office at April_Jones@klobuchar.senate.gov for additional information. Or you can reach Meagan Foster in Rep. Welch's office at Meagan.Foster@mail.house.gov.

Please send a reply or call me if you have any questions.
Thank you for all of your efforts to see our country through this crisis,
Roger

Roger Nishi
Vice President – Industry Relations
Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom
PO Box 9
Waitsfield, VT 05673
802-496-8336 – Desk
802-279-8000 – Wireless
rnishi@corp.wcvt.com