

From: Annette Smith <vce@vce.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2020 12:12 PM
To: Faith Brown <FBrown@leg.state.vt.us>; Ann Cummings <ACUMMINGS@leg.state.vt.us>
Subject: [External] comments on Amended S.301/Section 248a

[External]

(Faith, will you please provide this to the committee as they take up S.301 today)

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

I have reviewed the amended S.301 as posted today and would like to share these comments with the committee:

The directive to the PUC to recommend changes to Section 248a by Feb. 2021 is good. However, the bill does make Section 248a permanent, and therefore there is no incentive for next year's legislature to take up Section 248a again in the next session. The PUC could report that changes would be a good idea, but the legislative committees could choose not to address the report.

It would be much better if the bill requires that Section 248a sunsets on July 1, 2021 (or 2022), thereby giving the legislature the first half of the biennium (or the full biennium) to address the PUC's report and incorporate any recommended changes.

VCE does not support the amended bill as written, but we would support it if the sunset is kept in place so that the legislature is committed to reviewing it again. We presented sufficient evidence that in its current state, Section 248a is inconsistent in how it is applied, is inadequate in terms of public notice, and is insufficient to address the changing telecom technologies.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Annette

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