

**Sunset Advisory Commission**  
**Board and Commission Review of Telecommunications and Connectivity Advisory Board**

The Commission reviews every State board and commission and takes testimony regarding whether each board or commission should continue to operate or be eliminated and whether the powers and duties of any board or commission should be revised. Each board and commission has the burden of justifying its continued operation.

The Commission also reviews whether members of a board or commission should be entitled to a per diem and, if so, the amount of that per diem.

In testifying before the Commission, you should be able to provide the following information:

1. In general, how often does the board and commission meet? Provide specific information on how often the board or commission has met in the past two fiscal years. Provide information on where agendas and minutes of meetings can be found.

Per 30 V.S.A. § 202f, the board may meet up to six times a year. The board has met three times in the past two calendar years. Agendas and minutes can be found at:

[https://publicservice.vermont.gov/connectivity/advisory\\_board](https://publicservice.vermont.gov/connectivity/advisory_board)

2. Provide the names of members of the board or commission, their term length and expiration, their appointing authority, and the amount of any per diem they receive.

- David Snedeker - Northeastern Vermont Development Association
- Michael Clasen - State Treasurer designee (permanent) (no per diem)
- Secretary Michael Schirling – ACCD (permanent) (no per diem)
- Robert T. White - Agency of Transportation designee (permanent) (no per diem)
- Theresa Membrino- at large (two years) (no per diem)
- Katherine Sims, Northeast Kingdom Collaborative (two years) (no per diem)
- Evan Carlson – at large (two years) (no per diem)

3. Provide an overview of the board or commission’s purpose.

30 V.S.A. § 202f (a) “There is created the Telecommunications and Connectivity Advisory Board for the purpose of making recommendations to the Commissioner of Public Service regarding his or her telecommunications responsibilities and duties as provided in this section.”

(f) The Connectivity Advisory Board shall:

(1) have review and nonbinding approval authority with respect to the awarding of grants under the Connectivity Initiative. The Commissioner shall have sole authority to make the final decision on grant awards, as provided in subsection (g) of this section.

(2) function in an advisory capacity to the Commissioner on the development of State telecommunications policy and planning, including the action plan required under subdivision 202e(b)(6) of this chapter and the State Telecommunications Plan.

(3) annually advise the Commissioner on the development of requests for proposals under the Connectivity Initiative.

(4) annually provide the Commissioner with recommendations for the apportionment of funds to the High-Cost Program and the Connectivity Initiative.

(5) annually provide the Commissioner with recommendations on the appropriate Internet access speeds for publicly funded telecommunications and connectivity projects.

4. Is that purpose still needed? What would happen if the board or commission no longer fulfilled that purpose?

Yes. The TCAB provides valuable oversight of the Department's Connectivity Initiative grant recommendations. If the board no longer fulfilled their purpose, there would be no outside body providing oversight to grants made through the Connectivity Initiative.

5. How well is the board or commission performing in executing that purpose? What evidence can you provide to substantiate that performance?

The board has performed adequately. The board has assisted the commissioner in issuing over \$2 million to fund over thirty projects since 2015.

6. If the purpose is still needed, can State government be more effective and efficient if the purpose was executed in a different manner?

It doesn't appear necessary to make any changes to the way the board functions.

7. If the purpose is still needed, do any of your board or commission's functions overlap or duplicate those of another State board or commission or federal or State agency? If so, is your board or commission still the best entity to fulfill the purpose?

Not to our knowledge.

8. Does the board or commission's enabling law continue to correctly reflect the purpose and activities of the board or commission?

Yes.

9. Provide a list of the board and commission's last fiscal year expenditures including staffing costs. How are these funded?

There have been no expenditures in the last fiscal year.

10. Is the board or commission required by law to prepare any reports or studies for the Legislature, the Governor, or any State agency or officer? If so, have those reports or studies been produced? Does the board or commission have ongoing reporting obligations?

This board is not required to prepare any reports or studies. The TCAB reviews and advises the Department of Public Service on its reports.

11. How would you measure the performance of the board or commission?

The board has performed adequately. They are active and engaged in providing recommendations for the Connectivity Initiative. Some members provided comments for the State Telecommunications Plan.