

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Appropriations to which was referred House Bill No.
3 360 entitled “An act relating to accelerated community broadband
4 deployment” respectfully reports that it has considered the same and
5 recommends that the bill be amended as follows:

6 First: In Sec. 1, findings and intent, in subsection (a), by adding subdivision
7 (18) to read as follows:

8 (18) The Department of Public Service estimates that 82 percent of
9 Vermont addresses (254,000 locations) lack access to 100 Mbps symmetrical
10 service. The total cost to provide 100 Mbps symmetrical service to each of
11 these locations is approximately \$1,000,000,000.00. This figure is based on
12 estimates in the Magellan Advisors’ report commissioned by the Department,
13 and it includes estimates of both fixed and variable capital costs for fiber to the
14 premise infrastructure (*Feasibility Study of Electric Companies Offering*
15 *Broadband in Vermont*, dated December 31, 2019).

16 Second: In Sec. 2, 30 V.S.A. chapter 91A, in section 8087, the Community
17 Broadband Preconstruction Grant Program, by adding subsection (c) to read as
18 follows:

19 (c) To ensure the expeditious allocation of funds prior to the organization
20 of the Vermont Community Broadband Authority, the Department of Public

1 Service is authorized to allocate up to \$9,000,000.00 under this Program on or
2 before September 30, 2021.

3 Third: In Sec. 2, 30 V.S.A. chapter 91A, by striking out section 8088 in its
4 entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new section 8088 to read as follows:

5 § 8088. CONSTRUCTION GRANT AND SUBORDINATED DEBT
6 PROGRAM

7 (a) The Authority shall establish the Construction Grant and Subordinated
8 Debt Program for communications union districts to support projects that are
9 consistent with the funding priorities established in section 8086 of this
10 chapter, including by supplementing financing under the Vermont Economic
11 Development Authority’s Broadband Expansion Loan Program.

12 (b) Lending and grant decisions under this section shall be made by the
13 Vermont Community Broadband Authority Board of Directors. The Vermont
14 Economic Development Authority shall service all loans made pursuant to this
15 section. In the event of default by a loan recipient, the Vermont Economic
16 Development Authority shall consult with the Vermont Community Broadband
17 Authority prior to commencing any collection action.

18 Fourth: In Sec. 4a, position transfer, after the first sentence, by adding a
19 new second sentence to read as follows: The position shall remain in the
20 classified service created in 3 V.S.A. chapter 13.

1 Fifth: By striking out Sec. 23, appropriations; fund transfers, in its entirety
2 and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 23 to read as follows:

3 Sec. 23. APPROPRIATIONS; GRANT ADMINISTRATION

4 (a)(1) To the extent necessary, for appropriations using federal funds
5 provided to the State by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), the
6 Commissioner of Finance and Management is authorized to expend the funds
7 in anticipation of receipts.

8 (2) In fiscal year 2021, to the extent permitted by federal law and
9 guidance, \$150,000,000.00 of federal funds allocated to the State by the ARPA
10 shall be appropriated as follows:

11 (A) \$30,000,000.00 to the Vermont Community Broadband Fund to
12 support the Community Broadband Preconstruction Grant Program established
13 in Sec. 2, 30 V.S.A. § 8087, of this act;

14 (B) \$120,000,000.00 to the Vermont Community Broadband Fund to
15 support the Construction Grant and Subordinated Debt Program established in
16 Sec. 2, 30 V.S.A. § 8088, of this act; and

17 (3) In fiscal year 2021, to the extent permitted by federal law and
18 guidance, \$100,000.00 of federal funds allocated to the State by the ARPA
19 shall be appropriated to the Department of Labor to support the broadband
20 occupational needs survey required by Sec. 20 of this act and the broadband
21 installer apprenticeship program established in Sec. 22 of this act as follows:

1 (A) \$3,000.00 to finance the development of the apprenticeship
2 program;

3 (B) \$90,000.00 to support the related instruction tuition and on-
4 the-job training contracts with employer-sponsors under the apprenticeship
5 program; and

6 (C) \$7,000.00 to support non-federally funded work related to
7 developing, conducting, and reporting on the occupational needs survey.

8 (c) In fiscal year 2022, the Authority is authorized to expend \$500,000.00
9 in anticipated receipts pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 7523(b) (0.4 percent of the
10 Vermont Universal Service Charge) to support the start-up costs of the
11 Vermont Community Broadband Authority.

12 (d) The Vermont Community Broadband Authority shall be redesignated as
13 the responsible entity for administering the \$1,000,000.00 grant award to the
14 Department of Public Service by the Northern Border Regional Commission
15 (NBRC) for the purpose of supporting communications union districts. Any
16 position funded by the grant shall be overseen and managed by the Authority
17 in a manner that is consistent with grant terms and conditions.

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2 (Committee vote: _____)

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Representative _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE