

Theresa Utton-Jerman

Subject: Funding for Communication Union Districts

Dear Rep. Hooper,

It has come to my attention that identifying and making available funding now to CUD's is under consideration. If we are to succeed in deploying fiber to our potential customers before the end of this year, it is important that we not lose this construction season.

DVFiber (Deerfield Valley Communications Union District) has 21 member towns in 3 counties in Southern Vermont, including some of the least well served communities in Vermont. Our goal is to create a public/private partnership to design, construct and operate our network with one or more partners. Toward that end we have issued an RFP which will result in a signed contract(s) by the end of May at which time we would hope to begin work. Pole studies have been completed in four of our towns, and we are ready immediately begin work in those communities while proceeding to complete pole studies in the rest of our towns.

Specifically, here is what is needed short-term:

- Legal and professional help to negotiate the financial, engineering, construction, and legal terms of agreement with our potential partner - \$50,000
- Pole studies for the remaining Phase 1 towns, \$150,000
- High Level design for all 21 towns, and detailed engineering for the first 4 towns, \$400,000

There is Cares Act funding, but it is limited and it is not clear whether these items qualify under the terms of this Federal program. I would be happy to send you and your Committee detailed information on how we arrived at these numbers. The timing of the need is now for the first item as this relationship that will result from the private/public partnership is the basis for all future action. Funding for the other two items is needed by June 1.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ann Manwaring