



# Testimony on the House Energy & Technology Committee Bill on Broadband Expansion

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## About VPIRG

- Vermont's largest environmental and consumer protection advocacy organization
- 50,000+ members and supporters statewide
- Members in every town in the state
- For nearly 50 years, VPIRG has advocated for the public interest in policy debates concerning the environment, health care, consumer protection, and democracy



## VPIRG & Connectivity

- Universal access to affordable, world-class broadband is in the public interest
- We see a solution in community-owned fiber networks (i.e. CUDs)
- Community networks achieve universal service and do so while adhering to consumer protection principles
- Supported Act 79



## Support for Draft Broadband Committee Bill

From our perspective, we see this bill as trying achieve three key principles:

- Increase access to capital
- Increase accountability
- Increase coordination

We support this approach!



## Increasing access to capital

VPIRG supports:

- The expansion of the VEDA loan program
- The establishment of a complementary subordinated loan program
- Continued assistance in the form of grants to the CUDs to support administrative needs, technical assistance, and pre-construction costs.

# The VT State Broadband Policy Accountability and Coordination Meter

## Act 79

Higher standards for  
Connectivity Initiative

Creation of Rural Broadband  
Tech Specialist

## 2021 Bill

Creation of VCBA

Public funds flow through  
Communications Union  
Districts

75 % served in  
4 to 5 years  
100% served in  
6 to 7 years

75 % served in  
3 to 4 years  
100% served in  
... 9, 10 years ...  
never?

