

1 H.360

2 *HE&T recommends additional proposals of amendment as follows:*

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

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

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

16 (c) To ensure the expeditious allocation of funds prior to the organization  
17 of the Vermont Community Broadband Authority, the Department of Public  
18 Service is authorized to allocate up to \$9,000,000.00 under this Program on or  
19 before September 30, 2021.

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

1     § 8088. CONSTRUCTION GRANT AND SUBORDINATED DEBT

2             PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

19    Sec. 23. APPROPRIATIONS; GRANT ADMINISTRATION

20            (a)(1) To the extent necessary, for appropriations using federal funds  
21    provided to the State by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), the

1 Commissioner of Finance and Management is authorized to expend the funds  
2 in anticipation of receipts.

3 (2) In fiscal year 2021, to the extent permitted by federal law and  
4 guidance, \$200,000,000.00 of federal funds allocated to the State by the ARPA  
5 shall be appropriated as follows:

6 (A) \$40,000,000.00 to the Vermont Community Broadband Fund to  
7 support the Community Broadband Preconstruction Grant Program established  
8 in Sec. 2, 30 V.S.A. § 8087, of this act; and

9 (B) \$160,000,000.00 to the Vermont Community Broadband Fund to  
10 support the Construction Grant and Subordinated Debt Program established in  
11 Sec. 2, 30 V.S.A. § 8088, of this act.

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

16 (c) In fiscal year 2021, a one-time General Fund appropriation in the  
17 amount of \$100,000.00 shall be made to the Department of Labor to support  
18 the broadband occupational needs survey required by Sec. 20 of this act and  
19 the broadband installer apprenticeship program established in Sec. 22 of this  
20 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-the-  
4 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           (d) The Vermont Community Broadband Authority shall be redesignated as  
9 the responsible entity for administering the \$1,000,000.00 grant award to the  
10 Department of Public Service by the Northern Border Regional Commission  
11 (NBRC) for the purpose of supporting communications union districts. Any  
12 position funded by the grant shall be overseen and managed by the Authority  
13 in a manner that is consistent with grant terms and conditions.