

NEK Community Broadband

Testimony by:
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Hallquist
Chair, Evan Carlson

Prepared Testimony for Vermont
Senate Finance Committee
April 7, 2021

Vermont's Last Mile and the case for CUD's

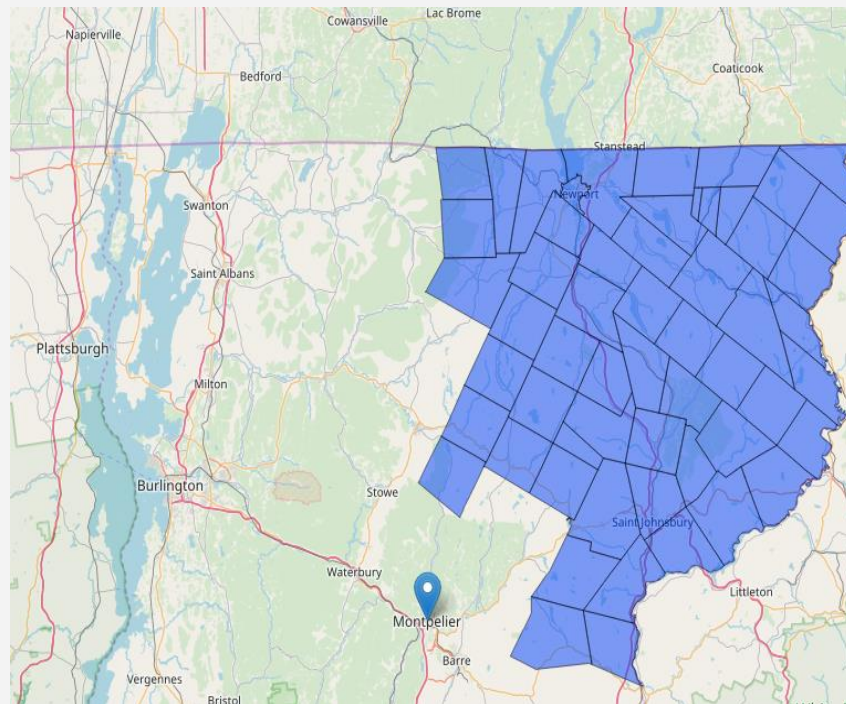
- The NEK has been aggressively working towards this moment since 2017
- Our 35 town district represent some of the most rural communities in the state that will **NEVER** be served in the current competitive landscape.
- The legislature and the Governor have made it clear that CUDs are the organization that can bring us to universal service
- We are driven, not by revenue and shareholder expectations, but by our communities need and a **belief in equity**. We are **accountable to our neighbors**.
- Over the past year, CUD's put in **1000s of volunteer hours** to bring the districts to where we are today - we're ready to build networks.
- The good will of our communities should not be taken for granted.

NEK Broadband Progress & Plans

- Conducted Feasibility & Business Planning
- Defined projects for 2021, 2022 & beyond
- RBDG & NBRC grant applications submitted
- In discussion with abutting CUD's about resource sharing
- Finalizing MOUs with local ISP(s)
- Actively working on partnerships with distribution utilities & VELCO
- Submitting make-ready applications
- Plans to contract a engineering consultant to support administrator, Christine Hallquist

NEK Broadband Network Deployment Timeline

- Phase 1 - Pilot Project Concord/Waterford 2021
 - April through October, Make-ready
 - May, Engineering
 - June, order materials
 - October – November, construction
 - November - December - customer connections
- Phase 2 - Backbone & Key Connectors - 2022-2023
- Phase 3 - Last Miles - 2023-2026



Concord Waterford Project Overview

- 22 miles of fiber
- Provides access to 293 addresses
 - ½ unserved
 - ½ served 4/1
- CARES funded – 104 addresses
- RBDG funded – 89 addresses
- Total cost projection - \$650,000
- CARES grant (approved) - \$460,000
- Anticipated RBDG grant - \$190,000
- Will construct CARES portion if not awarded RBDG grant



Light green – USDA eligible borrowing area