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Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 8:29 AM
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Cc: Fish, Robert <robert.fish@vermont.gov>
Subject: [External] H.360 Broadband Testimony

[External]

Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Having listened to H.360 hearings last week, I had the sense that you heard several conflicting testimonies regarding the merits of H.360. I would like to challenge several of the points raised by them directly.

CUD's Capabilities/Capacity:

- With dedicated volunteers with broad experience most of the State's CUDs have completed Broadband Feasibility Studies and Business Plans.
- These plans were prepared by some of the best firms in the region.
- Many of the CUD's have either issued or are about to issue RFPs for Design and Engineering Studies for completion this year.
- CVFiber, ECFiber, and NEK Broadband are partnering with Washington Electric Coop to develop a dark fiber network in 41 communities to be leased to these CUDs greatly reducing the costs to bring high speed broadband to everyone.

Financing:

- ARP funds can bring affordable high speed broadband at affordable prices to most everyone in much of Vermont.
- CUDs view this as public investment in public infrastructure for future generations, not a giveaway.

StarLink as a Substitute:

- Starlink Technology is not the solution for remote locations that do not have line of sight to their satellite constellation.

Commercial Providers Are Better Equipped to Provide Service:

- CUD's main mission is to provide service to the underserved and unserved locations in the state.

- Commercial Providers have not attempted this because of a lack or return on investment.
- CUD survey results have shown that existing providers have a poor customer support record and would prefer a community-owned alternative.

Thank you for the considerable time you have spent on this bill and the future of broadband in Vermont. I believe we cannot wait for study committees. The proposed VCBA with PSB support until established is in the best position to birth the final solution to make high speed broadband accessible to all Vermonters.

Best regards,
David Healy

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