



Okemo Valley TV
37C Main Street
Ludlow, Vt. 05149
(802) 228-8808 | okemovalley.tv

February 20, 2024

Re: Vermont Access Network FY2025 Request

To the Members of the Joint Fiscal Committee:

I am writing to you as the Executive Director of Okemo Valley TV, a non profit community TV station and media resource serving several rural Towns in the Black River Valley and Okemo Mountain region in Southern Windsor County. We are a designated “PEG” Access station, one of the 24 such designees providing related community-based media services in Vermont. We are an active member of the Vermont Access Network, our statewide membership and advocacy organization. I ask that you support the Vermont Access Network’s request for a \$1 million FY2025 appropriation as one-time funding, while a permanent funding source is discussed in the legislature.

As you may be aware, PEG stations were first established on the federal level as a public benefit related the proliferation of cable infrastructure and the delivery of cable TV service. In essence, it was meant as a way to give back to the local community in exchange for cable companies’ use of public rights-of-way in the delivery of their service. These regulations were written in the early 1980s and have largely remained unchanged. Here in Vermont, our PEG stations have evolved to become valuable media resources for the communities that we serve. Today, most of the services that we provide have little to nothing to do with cable TV. At Okemo Valley TV, the vast majority of our viewership is through the internet – whether that be our video-on-demand, or streaming channels, or our “over-the-top” (OTT) streaming app (free to download). Our media education services, which include trainings and workshops, are mostly focused on web-based delivery of audio & video. A new funding source that is more reflective of where we are today is needed, and through the work of the Vermont Access Network, we are making progress with that effort.

I am grateful for the support we have received from the Legislature over the past few years. This has helped offset the loss of cable revenue, while affording us with the opportunity to develop new financial and operational strategies as we plan for the future. Much progress has been made in this effort by the, and we are closing in on a solution. I respectfully request that you consider supporting the \$1 million request from Vermont Access Network for FY2025.

Regards,

Patrick Cody, Executive Director