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Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Public Hearing

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My name is Lisa Byer, I am the Executive Director of Catamount Access Television (CAT-TV) in Bennington, VT. We serve as the Public, Educational, Governmental (PEG) Access Center for the 5 towns of Bennington, North Bennington, Woodford, Pownal and Shaftsbury. CAT-TV is a member of the Vermont Access Network (VAN) which represents all the 24 PEG Access Centers in Vermont.

I am asking for support of the Vermont Access Network's request of a one-time appropriation of \$1,000,000 for fiscal year 2024 as the third year of bridge funding to secure a funding stream to replace declining cable revenues.

VAN's PEG Access Centers are woven into the fabric of community life and deliver essential services that add to local resilience. We promote access to multimedia services that foster free speech and public dialogue. We provide coverage of hyper-local content that encourages citizens to engage in local government, education, arts, and other areas of interest. We also offer equipment and training to citizens to enable them to tell their own stories.

Vermont Access Network is working to ensure that Vermont continues to have access to the essential services provided by our Access Centers. Until a long-term funding solution can be identified, this bridge funding is critical to maintaining the health of community media in Vermont as expenses continue to rise and cable revenue continue to decline.

Please support the Vermont Access Network – our state's 24 Community Media (PEG-TV) Centers – with a one-time appropriation of \$1,000,000 for fiscal year 2024, as the third year of bridge funding to secure a funding stream to replace declining cable revenues.

Lisa Byer
Executive Director

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