

**No. R-23. House concurrent resolution honoring Vermont's communications union districts for their visionary leadership and effective efforts in bringing world-class fiber-optic service to rural communities.**

(H.C.R.18)

Offered by Representatives Sibia of Dover, Cooper of Pownal, and Greer of Bennington

*Whereas*, reliable broadband is a critical utility that enhances economic development, supports educational opportunities, facilitates telehealth services, enables remote work, and strengthens communities, and

*Whereas*, in order to solve the rural broadband crisis in Vermont, in 2015 Acts and Resolves No. 41, codified as 30 V.S.A. chapter 82, the General Assembly established the process for the formation and operation of a communications union district (CUD), and

*Whereas*, the CUD structure places long-term control of fiber-broadband assets in the hands of Vermonters through a governing board consisting of one representative from each town in the CUD, and

*Whereas*, these unique municipal subdivisions, currently nine in number, serve a pivotal role in addressing Vermont's digital divide, and their financing is acquired through the leveraging of municipal revenue bonds, securing grants from the Vermont Community Broadband Fund, entering into public-private partnerships, and using other financial resources, all without triggering financial liability for CUD member communities or individuals, and

*Whereas*, the leadership, staff, and volunteers of the CUDs have demonstrated extraordinary dedication and collaboration in their establishment of fiber-optic infrastructure in rural and remote areas of Vermont, resulting in a reduction from 100,000 to 20,000 of internet addresses with no or subpar broadband service, *now therefore be it*

***Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:***

That the General Assembly honors Vermont's communications union districts for their visionary leadership and effective efforts in bringing world-class fiber-optic service to rural communities, *and be it further*

***Resolved:*** That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to each CUD, the Vermont Community Development Board, and Governor Philip B. Scott.