To the House Appropriations Committee and the Broadband Board:

The House Committees on Corrections & Institutions and Energy & Digital Infrastructure write in enthusiastic ==unanimous== support of the plan to expand Wi-Fi within Vermont's correctional facilities. This recommendation is based upon the following factors:

- This project will improve working conditions for Corrections Officers and other DOC staff.
  - Digital records collection (tablets) versus current paper/pencil. Easier to do, better for data collection/analysis.
  - Enhanced ability to monitor and control access throughout facilities, including syncing of CO bodycams.
  - Educational opportunities through CCV and departmental trainings.
  - Connectivity with loved ones during breaks, potentially resulting in greater satisfaction/retention.

- This project will improve living conditions and outcomes for incarcerated individuals.

  - Opportunities for vocational training, potentially leading to certification, as well as the chance to apply for work while still incarcerated.
  - Allowing CCV to grow course offerings from two in-person classes per facility per semester to a much wider array of coursework using asynchronous and/or remote online classes. These classes are needed to meet federal Title IV/Second Chance Pell Grant funding requirements.
  - Improvements in health management, including opportunities for telehealth visits as well as monitoring through medical alert bracelets.

- This project is ready for prime time.
  - Examined and re-examined over the course of the last few years, to the point that it is turn-key.
  - The switch in plans from purchased to leased equipment means that hardware will not become obsolete over time.
  - The switch from purchasing to leasing also takes the initial cost from $3 million or more to approximately $1 million, with some of that available from the IT Modernization Fund.

This project is supported by the administration and the policy committees of jurisdiction. The price is reasonable, the need is real, and the time is now.