

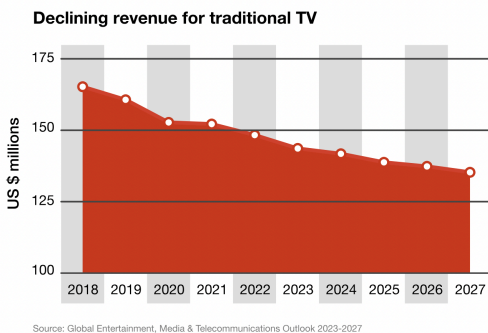


**Follow up to Secretary of State’s Testimony Concerning Vermont Access Network’s (VAN) FY26 Funding Request provided by Lauren-Glenn Davitian, Public Policy Director CCTV Center for Media + Democracy for VAN, [davitian@cctv.org](mailto:davitian@cctv.org)**

Dear Senator Perchlik and Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee:

We appreciate the Secretary of State’s support for Vermont Access Network’s FY26 Budget request for \$1.35M. VAN offers the following additional information in response to your Committee discussion with the Secretary last week.

**1. Cable Revenue Trends** - Senator Perchlik asked about Vermont cable TV revenue trends. Here is the national picture:



Here is VAN's analysis of the Vermont picture based on funding received and past/ projected expenses:

<b>Cable Revenue Decline</b>			
<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Revenue</b>	<b>Decline \$</b>	<b>Decline %</b>
FY22	\$7,990,083		
FY23	\$7,805,722	\$184,361	2.31%
FY24	\$7,001,587	\$804,135	10.30%
FY25 (Projected)	\$6,296,427	\$705,160	10.07%
FY26 (Projected)	\$5,675,897	\$620,530	9.86%
FY27 (Projected)	\$5,128,135	\$547,762	9.65%

<b>AMO Expense Increase</b>			
<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Increase \$</b>	<b>Increase %</b>
FY22	\$8,512,726		
FY23	\$8,929,683	\$416,957	4.67%
FY24	\$9,534,298	\$604,615	6.34%
FY25 (Projected)	\$10,202,789	\$668,491	6.55%
FY26 (Projected)	\$10,943,053	\$740,265	6.76%
FY27 (Projected)	\$11,784,153	\$841,099	7.14%

**2. Community Radio** - VAN members have an interest community radio because a handful of our members now operate or are planning to operate low power radio stations. Community radio is spread geographically across the state, and reaches over 200,000 Vermonters (a number that will grow with 6 more LPFMs coming on the air soon). In addition to terrestrial broadcasting, many of these stations also stream online.

Why fund community radio on the state level? Community radio has the unique ability to react almost immediately to emergencies and natural disasters and get critical information out to listeners quickly. This has been demonstrated during the catastrophic flooding in recent years and in a number of other localized emergencies.

[H.307](#) contained a proposal to fund community radio stations (\$250K) because of their unique ability to react almost immediately to emergencies and natural disasters, quickly broadcasting critical information to local communities. That bill was absorbed into a larger emergency management/all hazard event mitigation bill, [H.397](#), which passed favorably out of the House Government Operations committee. When it was sent to House Appropriations, the bill was stripped of all appropriations. The bill is now in the hands of the Senate, who could opt to re-introduce appropriations for community radio and others.

**3. Long Term PEG AMO Funding** - VAN presented viable options to the Legislature last year, the result of a 2020 Working Group and several years of consideration. In 2024, the House Ways and Means Committee declined to move ahead with the Pole Attachment Fee proposed by VAN. The Senate declined to move forward with the Streaming Tax approved by Senate Finance. VAN is prepared to work with the Legislature to bring these policy bills forward again the coming year(s) depending upon the political appetite for sustainability options and new tax/fees.

We are happy to provide additional information or testimony at your convenience.