

The Department of Public Service strongly advocates for the removal or extension of the sunset of 30 V.S.A. § 248a

The Department prefers the senate version that removes the sunset date.

If that is not an option, we advocate for more than the 4 years proposed in the house version, 10 would be great, 7 would be easier to work with than 4.

If those are not an option, we accept the house version and think the rulemaking outlined is a logical next step after the Department did its study three years ago.

Despite any conditions the department feels 248a should be renewed.

The Pew Research Center publishes information regarding cell phone dependence via several metrics.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/mobile/>

Some key metrics are below

OWNERSHIP

From 2011 to 2025 Pew research center indicated smartphone ownership has risen from 35% to 91%

Dependence

Today, 16% of U.S. adults are “smartphone-only” internet users – meaning they own a smartphone but do not subscribe to a home broadband service.

AGE DEPENDENCE

| - | <u>Ages 18-29</u> | <u>30-49</u> | <u>50-64</u> | <u>65+</u> |
|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| <u>2025</u> | <u>27%</u> | <u>11%</u> | <u>15%</u> | <u>17%</u> |

Education dependence

| <u>Year</u> | <u>High school or less</u> | <u>Some college</u> | <u>College graduate</u> |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2025 | 27% | 15% | 6% |

Income Dependence (2025)

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Less than \$30,000 | 34% |
| \$30,000- \$69,999 | 19% |
| \$70,000- \$99,999 | 10% |
| \$100,000+ (NPORS) | 4% |

At risk populations are more likely to be dependent on a cell phone for internet access. Many services the state offers these populations are accessed via an internet connection.

248a petitions reviewed in 2024 and 2025

| <u>248a Tower Petitions -2025</u> | Totals |
|---|---------------|
| 248a De Minimis Application | 148 |
| 248a Limited Size and Scope (colocation/modification) | 7 |
| 248a Regular & LSS – (New Towers) | 19 |
| Total 248a Reviews completed: | 174 |

2024 248a Tower Petitions

- De minimis application 58
- Limited size and scope (colocation/modification) 15
- Regular & Limited size and scope (new towers) 9
- Total 72

Previous report and Public Guide

The Public Service Department did a study to solicit input on the process in 2022

The report can be found at the link below.

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Legislative-Reports/01.11.24-H1110-legislative-report.pdf>

The Department offers a public guide to Section 248a on its website.

[Public Guide to the Section 248a Process | Department of Public Service](#)