

1 Introduced by Team Connect Vermont

2 Referred to Committee on Commerce and Economic Development

3 Date: 11/15/2015

4 Subject: Study on feasibility and possible implementation of full-coverage
5 wireless internet through satellite technology.

6 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: The purpose of this bill is to
7 explore methods of increasing economic opportunity for all Vermonters
8 through the exploration of satellite based internet technology. The bill will
9 establish a committee to explore the feasibility of wireless satellite internet
10 technology and how Vermont can use that technology to create affordable,
11 accessible, reliable and state of the art technology for the evolving information
12 economy.

13 An act relating to the feasibility of widespread satellite internet technology
14 in Vermont

15 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

16 Sec. 1. 30 V.S.A § 202(g) is added to read:

17 * * *

18 (a) Creation. There is created a Satellite Internet Exploratory Study Committee
19 to research the feasibility of using satellite technology for wireless internet
20 connectivity as a public good.

1 (b) Membership. The Study Committee shall be composed of the following
2 members:

3 (1) One member of the Department of Public Service, chosen by the
4 commissioner, shall chair the Study Committee.

5 (2) One current member from the House Committee on Commerce and
6 Economic Development, selected by the chairperson of that Committee.

7 (3) One current member from the Senate Committee on Economic
8 Development, Housing, and General Affairs, selected by the chairperson of
9 that Committee.

10 (4) One member from the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community
11 Development selected by the Secretary.

12 (5) One member from the Norwich University David Crawford School of
13 Engineering specializing in satellite communications, if they so choose to
14 participate, selected by the director of the David Crawford School of
15 Engineering.

16 (6) One member from the National Rural Telecommunications
17 Cooperative, if they so choose to participate, selected by the board of
18 directors.

19 (7) One member from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, selected by
20 the Director of the Public Policy and Advocacy Department.

1 (8) One member from The Vermont Council on Rural Development,
2 selected by the Board of Directors.

3 (9) One At-Large member to represent the communities affected, selected
4 by the Governor.

5 (c) Powers and Duties. The Study Committee shall study the following factors
6 regarding the feasibility of using satellite technology for wireless internet
7 connectivity as a public good:

8 (1) the feasibility of 100% wireless internet coverage for all Vermonters;

9 (2) explore the affordability of providing 100% internet services for all
10 Vermonters;

11 (3) identify the possible state and federal regulatory barriers;

12 (4) determine the best available internet speeds from satellite internet
13 technology;

14 (5) explore the reliability of wireless internet from satellite internet
15 technology;

16 (6) examine case studies of other states of similar topography to
17 Vermont and determine whether the case study is applicable to Vermont;

18 (7) explore how existing network infrastructure can be utilized for future
19 satellite internet technology;

20 (8) upon completion of the feasibility study, the Study Committee chair
21 shall report the study results in the next legislative session:

1 (A) to the committees of jurisdiction; and

2 (B) to the Governor.

3 (d) Preliminary Implementation Plan. If the Study Committee determines that
4 satellite internet technology is feasible, the Study Committee shall develop a
5 preliminary implementation plan, which shall consist of:

6 (1) a projected timeline for implementing wireless internet service, for all
7 Vermonters, using satellite internet technology;

8 (2) interim benchmarks and goals throughout the implementation process;

9 (3) a cost-benefit analysis, an anticipated budget, and possible financing
10 options for implementation;

11 (4) any additional provisions that are relevant and reasonable for successful
12 implementation of satellite internet technologies; and

13 (5) upon completion of the preliminary implementation plan, the Study
14 Committee chair shall report the survey results in the next legislative
15 session:

16 (A) to the General Assembly; and

17 (B) to the Governor.

18 (e) Assistance. Upon request of the chair, the Study Committee may have the
19 administrative, technical, fiscal, and legal assistance of the Office of Legislative
20 Council, the Joint Fiscal Office, the Department of Public Service, and additional
21 expert testimony regarding satellite internet technologies.

1 (f) Grant Funding. The study shall be funded through available federal, state,
2 and private grant opportunities, including reimbursement under subsection (g)
3 of this Section.

4 (g) Reimbursement

5 (1) For attendance at meetings during adjournment of the General
6 Assembly, legislative members of the Study Committee shall be entitled to
7 per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to
8 2 V.S.A. § 406 for no more than twelve meetings.

9 (2) Other members of the Study Committee, including expert witnesses,
10 who are not employees of the State of Vermont and who are not otherwise
11 compensated or reimbursed for their attendance shall be entitled to per diem
12 compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 1010
13 for no more than twelve meetings.

14 (h) Study Committee Meetings.

15 (1) The Study Committee shall meet six times within six months after the
16 effective date to develop the feasibility study outlined in subsection (c) of
17 this Section.

18 (2) The Study Committee shall meet six times within six months after the
19 report mandated in subsection (c)(8) of this Section to develop the
20 preliminary implementation plan outlined in subsection (d) of this Section.

1 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

2 This act shall take effect one month after the confirmation of grant funding.