

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA RELEASE

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE CREATES WIRELESS COVERAGE MAPS AND SUBMITS CHALLENGE TO WIRELESS COVERAGE IN VERMONT

Montpelier—The Department of Public Service created an interactive map that shows the results of a drive test of mobile wireless coverage in the state. After reviewing providers' maps that purport to show the extent of their coverage, the Department undertook a drive test of all major roads in the state to collect data and assess where mobile wireless service is actually available from a consumer perspective. The Federal Communications Commission, through the Mobility Phase II program, intends to direct up to \$4.53 billion in support through reverse auctions to bidders that commit to offer mobile wireless service in eligible areas throughout the nation. When the program was announced only a small amount of territory in Vermont was eligible. The FCC authorized a process by which states could challenge asserted wireless coverage in apparently ineligible areas. The data developed through the Department's participation may render significantly more territory in Vermont eligible for the Mobility Phase II grant process.

“Access to wireless communications services is very important in our rural state. I am hopeful that our challenge will be fully sustained by the FCC. And I hope that companies will seek grants to serve the expanded territory made eligible through our efforts in the forthcoming FCC grant program,” said Public Service Commissioner June Tierney. Under the FCC rules for the program, areas without access to wireless service providing at least 5 Mbps will be eligible for the grants. To identify these areas, the FCC directed service providers to submit confidential information depicting the extent of existing service and used this to identify eligible areas. This process resulted in only 1,310 square kilometers of eligible areas in Vermont, out of a total territory of approximately 25,000 square kilometers.

Clay Purvis, Director for Telecommunications at the Department of Public Service said, “Anyone who drives Vermont's roads experiences that the industry's coverage data is not accurate. Many of the areas in Vermont shown as served at 5 Mbps on their coverage maps actually lack sufficient coverage to even make a call. Our staff tested coverage in Vermont along all major roads, downtowns and village centers to gather information to challenge the coverage shown on the FCC Eligible Areas map.” The FCC required challengers to conduct speed tests, at their own expense, on smartphones to rebut the coverage asserted by the providers. “The good news is that our tests newly identified 1,607 square kilometer blocks where service at 5 Mbps is available from at least one provider. Even better, the 4,186 one-kilometer square blocks where we were able to mount a challenge to the asserted coverage should now be eligible for the Mobility Phase II program,” he said. [A report](#) describing the initiative, statistics, static maps (PDF) and an interactive map depicting the drive test information are posted on the Department website at:

<https://publicservice.vermont.gov/content/mobile-wireless-2018-drive-test> .

For more information, contact Clay Purvis at the Department of Public Service by calling (802) 371-9655, via email at psd.telecom@vermont.gov, or by writing to the Department of Public Service, 112 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620-2601.

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