STATE OF VERMONT
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE

IN RE: THE 2014 VERMONT TELECOMMUNICATIONS PLAN

August 27, 2014
7:00 p.m.
Barre, Vermont

Public Hearing held before the Vermont Department of Public Service, at Alumni Hall, Barre, Vermont, on August 27, 2014, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

Vermont Department of Public Service:

James Porter, Esq., Director of Telecom
Clay Purvis
Corey Chase

COURT REPORTER: Deborah J. Slinn, RPR, CSR
California CSR 7918
New Hampshire CSR 79

CAPITOL COURT REPORTERS, INC.
P.O. BOX 329
BURLINGTON, VERMONT 05402-0329
(802) 863-6067
(802) 879-4736 (Fax)
E-MAIL: Info@capitolcourtreporters.com
SPEAKERS:
Christine Stumpf
Bran Towbin
Tony Campos
Rob Chapman
Henry Swayze
Chuck Sherman
Jason Powell
John Bloch
Andy Behrens
Charlie Larkin
Steve Whitaker
MR. PURVIS: Hello. Whoops, that's pretty loud. Hello, welcome. My name is Clay Purvis. To my left I have Corey Chase, to my right I have Jim Porter from the Department of Public Service. We're here tonight to discuss the ten-year telecommunications plan. Public comments, drafts that's been released in tonight's hearing is to hear your comments on that draft. The draft generally covers the State's telecommunications needs, telephone, broadband, and cable television.

I think the way we'll work tonight is instead of people getting up, since we have this mic we can have the mic passed around, so if you would like to speak, please raise your hand and the mic can come to you.

Because we have a court reporter, things will be on the record. So if you could please state your name and spell your last name and your first name as well. So with that I think we should get started.

And I would also like to mention that after the hearing we're welcome to answer any of your questions that you may have. Thank
you.

Would anyone like to come speak?

Charlie, I want to try to give someone else a chance first, if there is. If no one is interested in --

CHRISTINE STUMPF: I will speak. I missed what you gave us as a queue for --

MR. PURVIS: What do you mean queue?

(Discussion held off the record)

CHRISTINE STUMPF: My name is Christine Stumpf. S-t-u-m, like Mike, P like Peter, F like Frankenstein.

And I'm from East Randolph, Vermont, which is in Orange County. And I'm actually here to ask you to consider having other hearings because there are four, they are all this week, end of August. None of them are in either Orange County or Windsor County. And those are two of the most unserved counties that we have in Vermont. They are highly agricultural, we don't have a lot of density.

Personally, for eight years now I have had -- FairPoint, Comcast. This year I signed up with -- I couldn't get a shot of
the satellite. I called Verizon and AT&T, cellular data, but we are kind of in a valley at the junction of 14 and 66, so we're hard to serve. And that's, by the way, going to be the problem we are going to have as far as the umbrella. A lot of unserved -- we're talking a little area. Vermont is challenging that way.

And who else have we tried? SilverNet, they went right down 14. And they buried the whole thing. I went conduit? Can you put conduit in so that they can pull more through there. I don't think they did conduit.

So then I went to try and just kind of go to all of my neighbors because we were all desperate. And I mapped all of the businesses in our area. And there are -- we do have Comcast which, of course, everybody gets the usual story with Comcast. There is a little bit of Comcast right at the junction of 14 and 66 where there is some density.

So my next door neighborhood who is not very faraway, has seven children she is trying to educate of which only four are hers, and the rest are adopted or fostered.
And, you know, try educating your kids when you can't get them the Internet to Google the stuff for their homework. And all the standardized tests are starting to be online. And so she went to Comcast and, my understanding, quoted us for $12,500.

So the problem that we're having is that we can't get anybody to come. So I finally went and documented everybody who is trying to start a business in our neighborhood. And there are 30 -- there's actually 52 total which a couple of them have Comcast.

Businesses, we can't get a website. Try starting a successful business when the only people that know about you are your next door neighbors in a low density area. This is all over the place. They range from somebody wanting to do a storage business. There is a couple of construction. There is a building business. There is a business for people who have disabilities, communication, they can't speak. We're an equine rehab. You know, if you want the list, it's all on the table.

So there is even a chance that we can help tax holes in Vermont, but we need the
State to help us get there so that we, you know, grow and prosper and have jobs for our kids.

So back to the hearings. I said I was going to talk about having more hearings. So there are two really underserved counties in the State of Vermont. They are Orange and Windsor. And there are four hearings, and not one of them is in those counties. And they are all at 7:00 in the evening. And those two counties, by the way, are pretty agricultural.

So, for example, I'm here on an equine farm. My neighbor to the right is a dairy farmer. Just back over the hill is Silloway Farms. And then we've got small farms, a little bit down, there is All Big Dairy. Try coming to a public hearing, make a public comment, when it is 7:00 at night and you have to get up at 4:00 in the morning. And you have to drive to the next county to do it and drive back.

So my request is can we have some more hearings, because there are people who really, you know, want to speak, but they
can't get to the places that the hearings are being held.

And the other thing is, I don't know if people are aware of this, because you think it's farming, you know, it's cows, but the agricultural industry, if you look especially at the country as a whole, is getting incredibly technological. In fact, technology is now agricultural. It's some stuff you can think about the general marketing process, price. Nowadays, markets are electronic, you need to be able to adjust your product to the current demand. That typically is also easiest to find electronically.

So there's a lot of reasons broadband is really open, actually running your milking stuff. Believe it or not there is a system that ties all of that really modern stuff that if you can tie that into the network, it makes you more competitive.

Vermont is a boutique place. No way to get away from that. But our boutiqueness is going to get a lot more -- and a lot easier to sort of sell on the market if we can get
these cows online. So I'm here to say please
have more hearings.

MR. PORTER: Can I ask you two
questions?

CHRISTINE STUMPF: Sure.

MR. PORTER: Certainly in your area I
think we should add a hearing. Where would
you recommend? I've certainly been to
Bennington and Vershire.

CHRISTINE STUMPF: Yep.

MR. PORTER: But not in a couple of
years. I think that's a good idea. Where do
you think would be the best location?

CHRISTINE STUMPF: I would do South
Royalton. They have a law school there.

MR. PORTER: Okay.

CHRISTINE STUMPF: Or maybe Bethel.
Because you've got the grange there. That's
a good enough size building that you would be
able to have people come in, but it's not so
big that they're going to be swimming in it.
And that's pretty easy to get to. So that
would be for Orange.

For Windsor, if you could give me an
e-mail address, I will send you something
from my phone.

MR. PORTER: Okay.

CHRISTINE STUMPF: So --

MR. PORTER: And then -- go ahead.

MR. PURVIS: I was going to ask what
time? I mean, you said that time is a
problem; so --

MS. STUMPF: For farming?

MR. PURVIS: For farming, but with --

CHRISTINE STUMPF: Most people milk
around four. And usually in the mornings you
are milking around five or six, and then in
the afternoons you get extra -- so if you can
get something in the middle of that time
period. So if I need to go work with the
horse people who are also dairy people,
typically I'm trying to show up either after
milking which is usually around six, 6:30.
Even seven would be okay, but it has to be
close to them. But I would aim for something
midday. And actually give me an e-mail
address and I will poll, say, four or five
dairy farms that are in my immediate area,
because they have a slightly different
schedule, and get back to you.
MR. PURVIS: That would be great.

MR. PORTER: That would be great. We'll definitely do that in either South Royalton or Bethel. If you have time after the hearing to meet with us, if you don't have to leave before, I would like one of us to talk to you about the gathering of neighbors. I'm interested in doing that and would like to pursue that a little bit --

CHRISTINE STUMPF: Sure.

MR. PORTER: -- if we could. If you have been here for the entirety, we can talk after or --

CHRISTINE STUMPF: Absolutely.

MR. PORTER: That would be great.

CHRISTINE STUMPF: I do want to say one thing, it may not be pertinent to the plan. I've read the plan. I have some comments on it. Hopefully you will have a hearing in my neighborhood and my neighbors and I will come. And I will say it then.

But I wanted to say that I know that VTA doesn't have the best rep and we obviously don't have Internet so we are not a big success story. But I called everybody and
finally I called VTA. And I reached somebody named Cara Thompson. And she actually has tried to help us.

And so one of the grants is going out.

And just to be clear, I reached out to them, and then I ended up going over to ECFiber.

And they said we don't have a rep in your area. Do you want to come and be a rep? So now I'm talking to them, we need it.

So, but they actually have tried to help us when everybody else just said no. So I know they've got it, but personally my experience is really positive and --

MR. PORTER: I think that's great. Just so you know, the legislature this year has created an activity fund where providers can come in and apply for money. Talking about adding a full-time facilitator who could be approved to work with somebody, so that's -- I appreciate it. That's great.

CHRISTINE STUMPF: Super. I guess in the spirit of whole disclosure I should tell you that this is my life now. I pick up a lot of poop and I teach people how to train horses. I had started out doing software.
And if you ended up looking at the section of the CTO for cable and wireless for a little while, just on their data site, so don't ask me why I ended up in Vermont, no Internet. I built the systems early on on the town horizons.

MR. PORTER: Really.

CHRISTINE STUMPF: So that's part of the reason why I am so desperate. Gives a reason why I'm hanging out, no one can reach me.

But all my neighbors want to do is educate their kids, and all are trying to start businesses. And at the moment our brakes are so bad that Gary, he is actually fixing our cars. So please, please, we don't want to have to keep fixing ours cars.

BRAN TOWBIN: Hello. My name is Bran Towbin.

THE REPORTER: I'm sorry, could you please spell your name?

BRAN TOWBIN: Bran, B-r-a-n. Last name is Towbin, T-o-w-b-i-n.

THE REPORTER: Thank you.

BRAN TOWBIN: Thank you very much for having this meeting. I have not actually had
a chance to go through carefully the report. I will say a couple of things, and I'm wearing two hats here. One is I am on the board of CVTV. And the other is I am a select board member of Plainfield.

I have had a number of interactions with telephone companies. And in the case of CVTV, Charter Communications, what I find is corporations that feel empowered and entitled to push local people around, small entities around.

I'll give you a couple of examples. One is in the town of Plainfield we have Cloud Alliance. It has a tower with collocation capabilities. VTel wants to place a tower in violation of our local zoning, about 1500 feet away from Cloud Alliance tower.

They will not come to terms with Cloud Alliance in terms of collocating. And if you sort of read between the lines, they are getting publicly funded, as I understand it, through federal dollars to build the town a new tower which would not have collocation capability.

They make the argument, I think some
suspect the argument, that they will serve
more people. I think that's a technical
issue. But what I'm getting at is that when
it comes to Act 248, I really think that
substantial deference needs to be paid to
local communities. And it is quite a burden
to put on select board and zoning officials
to compete against an entity that's really
just trying to, in my view, it seems pretty
apparent they are just trying to get a free
tower. I don't think that helps anybody.

I mean, I listen to this woman, you
know, who lives in an area that's completely
underserved. And we're funding, you know,
VTel to build out a tower for eighty or a
hundred thousand dollars. It's unfortunate.
Now they will have experts and argue the
other side. Let's not get into that right
now.

Another instance is Sovernet had to put
in some high speed fiber down Route 2. And
ran it into the town of Plainfield. And
ironically, I think there is some mandate
where they run it up to the Cloud Alliance
tower on the hill.
I requested that they, instead of going
down one street and then another street, if
they had gone down Main Street they would
have hit the fire department and the
municipal building.

They said well, no, we're not going to
do that. We're going to run it our way. And
if you want to get, you know, if you want to
assemble a bunch of customers, you can run it
to those things.

Now I think if something is being funded
by the taxpayer that the fire department and
municipal building deserve consideration as
well as the library.

What I'm getting at here is the overall
sense that these large corporations don't
really care about the local people on the
ground. And that's disturbing which brings
me finally to CVTV.

Public access is viable. The government
representative from Charter Communications
that came and addressed our Board showed
nothing but contempt for public access, and
it really got me upset. This is somebody who
basically wants to fund everything in a
diminuous fashion and has no regard for fully funding what I consider to be their obligations.

And I look forward to reading your plan, but I hope that in the plan there are resources and ways that the small player who is actually funding these guys with all these taxpayer resources stands a chance.

Now, CVTV has a wonderfully talented board, but I'm sure there are many small public access stations that just simply look at this process as we'll oversee these bread crumbs from these big cable players and hope for the best.

I think that public access is something -- Vermont is a state that really cherishes the local and community voice. I think that somebody needs to put these people's feet to the fire. So that's my sort of view from 2,000 feet.

MR. PURVIS: Thank you.

TONY CAMPOS: Hi. My name's Tony Campos. That's C-a-m-p-o-s. I'm executive director of CVTV here in beautiful downtown Barre.
I've been operating this station for over 20 years. And the evolution in the industry has gone from zero to 120 miles an hour. When we worked on this, what, ten years ago, we didn't know what a smart phone was. We didn't know what the Pad was. High speed Internet? We had dial-up. But now these big boys are starting to bundle. And when we started working on our renewal with Charter Communications three years ago we figured out one thing, the millennium will not be watching cable. The millennium will be watching everything on those tools in front of you.

And as executive director of CVTV and part of Vermont Access Network, we're the 800-pound gorilla in the room. We create more local content than Public Television, and all the major networks and franchises here in Vermont. We bring you city councils, we bring you hearings Under the Golden Dome, and we educate our community.

Yesterday we had a press conference at Barre City. We broadcast live on Channel 7.

Then my staff posted on the Internet and
within less than 12 hours we had 350 people watch that online, the entire press conference.

People are looking for content and we create, we create great content.

But not just the cable company is broadcasting, but the wireless companies. Dish networks, and they don't have to carry us. I think they should. I think anyone who wants to have a license here in Vermont needs to carry local access programming.

That's all I have to say. Thank you.

MR. PORTER: Thank you.

ROB CHAPMAN: Good evening. My name is Rob Chapman, C-h-a-p-m-a-n. And I'm from Montpelier. I currently serve as the executive director of Onion River Community Access media which is local media, the public access station for Montpelier and 13 surrounding towns.

I have worked in communities in the media sector for over 20 years, most of that in Vermont, and I have also served as the Vermont president of Vermont Access which is the association of Vermont access stations --
THE REPORTER: Could you slow down a little bit, please?

ROB CHAPMAN: Sure, absolutely.

Actually, I could submit this in an e-mail format; is that possible?

In reading the plan draft it was evident that there was a real emphasis on broadband deployment. Particularly to the difficulties associated with deploying in rural areas of Vermont. Those difficulties generally fell in the area of cost which is understandable.

My concern was that the plan has little in how to effectively use these connected telecommunication systems and engagement and public benefit in areas such as access to local government, communities, and nonprofits.

There was some mention of data and information use by the state government, but I believe there is room for additional applications by state government regards to the engagement and accessibility through the use of video content.

The question essentially is this one: Once it is built what do we do with it? Does
it simply mean that rural telecommunication customers will be able to shop on Amazon.com faster or watch their favorite HBO show On Demand or are there potential uses that plan condition?

These uses should include streaming local government meetings and community events, encouraging setting engagements for online discussions, and participating in forums and hearings like tonight's meeting, for example.

You could be even doing this streaming and people all over the state would be able to watch it and maybe even solicit comments through that medium.

I would advocate for increasing the attention to how broadband employment will benefit the general public beyond economic benefits and access to the Internet.

I would also encourage consideration of Vermont access centers as a partner in developing these significant pieces of broadband as we move from a world of cable to a broadband system.

And, of course, the question of funding.
Most of the plan talks about plans on how to fund the deployment of broadband, but funding for public uses of that broadband is noticeably lacking.

So I hope you will take some time to reconsider the plan to address some of that.

And thank you for your time and consideration.

MR. PORTER: Thank you.

HENRY SWAYZE: Hi. I'm Henry Swayze from Tunbridge. That's S-w-a-y-z-e, first name Henry.

I've been working on bringing broadband to all the people in my community, to every person in the community for seven plus years.

I currently serve on ECFiber's governing board as one of the representatives from Tunbridge, but I don't speak for them, I'm speaking for myself personally.

And I want to quote from the beginning of your plan, says Vermont law directs the Department to prepare periodically revised telecommunication plan covering a ten-year period. The plan must consider most of the salutory goals including strengthening the
universal availability and affordability of telecommunication services, supporting the availability of modern local services, providing the benefits of future advancements in technology to Vermont residents, and supporting competitive choices for customers.

And I would like to look at some of these requests or some of these legislative mandates. And look at what I think I see in the report.

So let's look at some of these. We start with strengthening the universal availability. Availability has indeed strengthened, but the universal part has not been accomplished. It must be for such things as if a teacher is going to assign a school assignment to everyone in their class, they can't do it if a quarter of the class doesn't have Internet coverage.

If an employer wants to allow employees to take a day or two days a week working from home, they can't put in a policy unless there is actually universal coverage. So I think the universal coverage piece is important.

If I look at the people in Tunbridge,
all of them, pretty much all, get dial-up. Some get satellite, some get DSL, but are not near a pop so they don't have much speed. They are getting pretty low quality DSL. And I get contacts over and over from people in the community saying when can I get good service.

And I have a particular case where I knew the mother and father are elderly and their son actually wants to come and live with them, and he has to have high speed Internet to be able to be here. And they are in a place that it will be three years before you see fiber hits, maybe four. It will take a while.

So that's the -- that's the universal availability issue.

Affordability, costs are very high and don't seem to be dropping fast. And I submit that this is due to a lack of cooperative getting together of the different entities that are offering service or the government programs that provide the service.

And if they were to get together, Vermont pays one of the highest prices per
gigabyte for access to the Internet because we're a long ways away from the major switches. And if people got together and pulled their resources, which I guess the for-profit companies don't want to, they seem to have their heels dug in pretty hard on that. I think that we would have much lower costs.

And then I see replication. I see fiber laid up the interstate. Fiber laid to all of the libraries and hospitals. But it's just cherry picked those things and it passes everyone else by and it's not really available. It's not -- it's not a -- it's not open network. And I think that there has to be open network.

I think that both commercial and what the VTA has done with their dark fibers, with getting open access to it for all people, is a great step forward.

But I think there will be pressure put on the for-profit corporations to be looking at what is for the public good rather than just looking at what's good for their good. And I see that's the flavor that seems to
come through and seems to come through in your report to some degree as well.

Providing the benefits of future advancements and technology to Vermont residents, many things are also already available, but not to many of the Vermonters due to inadequate Internet performance.

So these include making the use of Cloud. Updating your operating system in your computer. A lot of operating systems aren't even barely available on disk anymore. You need to download them. Updating programs, video conferencing, 3D modeling, designing, or hosting websites. Those are just to mention a few that a great many people are cut out. Not just the people -- I mean the plan says, oh yeah, there is a lot of people who got broadband coverage, but they don't have broadband coverage that will do those things. That's what really put us on the map.

We are clinging to an almost good enough standard for today's needs as we design for the future. So I think, I mean, you people in the report say it would be awfully nice to
have a hundred megabytes as a service, but
don't give us a path to it. They don't give
us a way of getting there.

And I think we need to go to those
numbers, maybe more. You know, I think that
we're building a system piecemeal, building
on old technologies. Everyone is paying for
through their bills are paying for those old
technologies that really aren't taking to the
future.

So we are just building and rebuilding
and rebuilding. And everyone is doing it
separately so you don't have the combined
cost of it, of the advantage of it.

If we took all the fiber that's been
strung in Vermont and ran it around we would
probably cover half the sites in Vermont.
It's just that people are running two and
three -- people running fiber on the same
poles, one hanging one on their bailiwick.

The last element is supporting
competitive choice for consumers. If you
look at my situation, I have -- I have
Verizon. I see Verizon's tower visually from
my window, but I have only one room in my
house where I really get the Verizon service. When I walk through the rest of the house I don't have even phone service with them.

I have no DSL. I have no, no cable. I can get WaveComm and I do. I'm on WaveComm service. It's a wireless service. And I'm on their basic service, 750K down and much, much slower up. And I go elsewhere whenever I have to do anything that is Internet intensive.

I spend two or three days a week in Burlington and I have 20 megabytes a second there. And I occasionally try to do things in Tunbridge. And I had a download I tried for eight hours. I finally said, well, I just can't do this. You know, it's not going to happen.

So, competitive choice. When we have services WaveComm has upped their ante of what they will offer. They are up to a meg now. Not still very fast service, but they are being crowded by DSL. So the fact that DSL has come in to some of their customers has made them raise what they offer a little bit.
And I do think that competition is useful in waking up providers and getting them to step up to the bar and do something. And I think the report fails miserably at the competitive piece. It looks as though some of the cable companies wrote a piece of the plan. And I think that's disgraceful. I don't think it sheds good light on you or the governor. And I don't think the plan should be left like that. I think that there should be encouragement of the competition, not blocking of competition and blocking of municipal carriers.

Thank you very much.

MR. PURVIS: Thank you.

MR. PORTER: I'm sorry, can I ask you one clarifying question that I really didn't understand?

HENRY SWAYZE: Sure.

MR. PORTER: In your last comment is the competitor that you are talking about that is void in the plan, or whatever your words were, municipal provider?

HENRY SWAYZE: Yeah.

MR. PORTER: Okay.
HENRY SWAYZE: Well, it's municipal, but I just think that that -- I think there is perhaps a feeling of remorse. I'm sympathetic with you people because you don't have any money to work with. We're asking you to do the impossible. So I understand that. But I think that you have a feeling that because the big boys are the ones that are providing the majority of the service, that you really have to keep them alive at the cost of intervators or competition coming in. And I think that's a mistake in thinking.

I think you have to encourage competition. And, I mean, if you look at old fashion copper telephone service, they have the requirement to be a bullet proof carrier, a carrier that's supplying voltage over the line to the customer. So even when there is a power outage the phone works. And it's a very high standard. And I am not seeing that high standard being required of anybody else. And I'm not sure it should be.

But if, you know, if we have a really severe weather event, a hurricane, a major
disruption, I think an awful lot of carrier
services will go down. And I think that that
kind of thing should be built in, but you
shouldn't do it by favoring old fashion
outdated copper line systems in order to do
it. You should do it by requiring the news
services to offer public access television,
to diversify and move into the next -- the
area we're going to rather than hanging onto
the past.

MR. PORTER: You bring up good points.
The first thing you said was when you quote
the statute is telecommunication services.
And nothing you said after that by law is a
telecommunication service. It kind of
highlights the problem.

It's interesting. When cable companies
in 2007 in Vermont started providing what I
believe was telephone service, they said it's
not. And it's interesting. We've now been
litigating with that company since 2007.

So you have highlighted really great
issues. And it's one of the things I
actually tried to get the jurisdiction over
the services, but that was very helpful.
HENRY SWAYZE: I realize it's sort of a legal stew or problem, but, and maybe it has to be done at the federal level. I don't know where all it has to be fixed, but Vermont is a leadership place. It's a place where you go put your elbow over the fence and say, hey, let's fix this, the problem, kind of pow-towing to it, and making a mess of it, of the plan.

CHRISTINE STUMPF: If you want afterwards, I can give you an inside perspective on --

THE REPORTER: Excuse me. Can you use the mic? Thank you.

CHRISTINE STUMPF: I'm sorry. If it helps afterwards, just because I was on the inside of this. From the perspective of a carrier, when the universal fund, service fund -- you have copper cages, and I don't think this is pertinent to this, but it's useful in terms of how the structure of that looked from the inside. With universal funds, service funds, there's two sets of books; the one that the federal government made you provide so that you could set rates
versus your internal set of books.

When we talk afterwards, if it's useful, I can go through that. Perhaps some of that structure might actually be useful. Because we did end up with universal service for telephones.

And because I was part of a company that was GTE, and GTE was the company that took all the leftover parts when AT&T was formed, all the parts like the area I live in right now, the back areas no one wants to serve, it's not profitable.

I can say this is how that was done. And maybe there is some stuff out of there that can be applied from a legislative perspective to maybe something that is workable for the carrier and for us citizens who just want to, you know, live, start businesses, educate our kids. I don't want to disrupt the meeting, but --

MR. PORTER: No, that's very interesting when you talk about the universal service. Actually in Vermont, a fund was created, a state fund was created in '97. It's never been activated until this past year.
CHRISTINE STUMPF: Right.

MR. PORTER: And we're directing it toward broadband structure which is the same. That's very interesting. Would love to talk to you more about it.

CHRISTINE STUMPF: Yeah. I was responsible for the liability as well from that perspective.

So, you know, and strangely enough, if I could just digress for one second. I was in the lab. And the way that we --

(Telephonic interruption)

CHRISTINE STUMPF: Because I came from very sophisticated software development systems. And I was, like, and I looked at the architecture. I am, like, gosh this is awesome. Because really for a minute it was really cheap. We were just connecting machines through each other and sending tons of data across very local, very low level connections with multiple -- anyways, I guess what I'm trying to say is as somebody who came in as a bit of a technological snob and I really got my comeuppance, and I looked at it and I was, like, and it was a good lesson
to me that sometimes simple solutions in
ing highly technical, highly demanding
people, are actually better.

So, I don't know. But this is a tough
problem. I'm not saying why don't you fix
it, but hopefully at the hearing we will have
some discussions about maybe improving the
plan so it gets fixed better.

CHUCK SHERMAN: I came late. I don't
know what the protocol is.

MR. PORTER: Start wherever you want to.

MR. PURVIS: Just say your name.

CHUCK SHERMAN: My name is Chuck
Sherman. Sherman like the tank,
S-h-e-r-m-a-n. And I haven't read your
report, but I know about it from reading the
Valley News and Vermont Digger, and about a
pot of gold.

When I came to Vermont nine years ago,
I'm a flatlander, to live in the middle of
nowhere and I do live in the middle of
nowhere. I am an abutter to the wildlife
management area.

I had my choice of dial-up or dial-up.
I was advised to get satellite, but I got
WaveComm and that worked for a while. We have 200 people in our little town.

When I say the middle of nowhere, it's still nowhere with cell phone coverages. Whenever I call AT&T with a problem, I say, would you please build a tower near me. I'm in Stratford, Vermont. I-91 goes this way, 89 goes this way, and they look at their map and they feel sorry for me because it's a big white hole.

But I'm lucky in another way in that I've got some 20 meg per second symmetric broadband now and I really love it. And it's done municipally, it's ECFiber.

Since I got hooked up first on my street, I was first in my town with WaveComm, now that there are ten families on Penwick Road, nine hooked up with ECFiber. The tenth is just waiting to have a conduit built so she doesn't have to have a wire hanging in the air. The municipal method for providing the service and working against those companies that have been screwing us for years, is working.

And financing fell through at the
beginning for ECFiber because of the financial turn in the country. And supporting it by bits and pieces, I think they are up to $5 million now and it's growing. And it's being helped by the state with OCFC, that's the Orange County, whatever, connector, the fiber, and put a couple more in a 23-town area. And that's helping. I mean, it might have been easier just to loan the money to ECFiber and let them build it, but it's going to work.

MR. PORTER: Well, if I could, just a response to that.

CHUCK SHERMAN: Sure.

MR. PORTER: One of the things in Act 65 is not lended. We want you to come in and apply for it and take it and build it. I think that's more of the model that we're trying to move forward.

CHUCK SHERMAN: Right.

MR. PORTER: For logistics is what you are talking about.

CHUCK SHERMAN: I just want you to know it doesn't work. With our terrain, with our topography, fiber to the home is the answer.
Waste any money by other technologies in the meantime would be sad. I guess that's what I have to say.

JASON POWELL: Jason Powell from Randolph. It looks like in the plan one of the big goals is to increase, get at least one provider, what's called broadband. So with that as a goal, I think it's important that the definition of broadband change and that kind of tracks with the FCC definition it looks like, but I think footnote 15 on page 116 is missing that should have addressed that or seems to be going.

And then if you get one provider, you have a monopoly, so it seems like the competition or at least controlling the prices becomes an issue when the goal is mainly to get one provider of that service into the town.

I think that's pretty much all.

MR. PURVIS: All right. Well, thank you very much.

MR. PORTER: Thank you for the footnote correction.

MR. PURVIS: Yeah. Would anyone else
like to speak? I know you do. I just want
to make sure that we get everyone else.
You've already spoken the last two nights.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I am still
composing my thoughts.

MR. PURVIS: Would you like to speak?

JOHN BLOCH: Sure.

MR. PURVIS: Thank you.

JOHN BLOCH: My name is John Bloch,
B-l-o-c-h. I live at 7 Liberty Street,
Montpelier, Vermont.

I am Chairman of the Board for ORCA,
Onion River Community Access. And I've
served on the governing board of ECFiber, for
full disclosure.

I set about reading your plan with great
anticipation and it was almost like replying
to a 25 percent off sale. When you get down
into the weeds, that's only for these
products that are only available Tuesdays and
Wednesdays.

I am depressed, psychologically and
every other way. After reading the plan very
carefully and very slowly, I will cut to the
chase here tonight.
A number one recommendation is that you take this plan and throw it in the trash and write a ten-year Telecom plan.

Number two, when you've done that, bring it back up for public comment. I know the statute says you have to have your work done by the first of September. You are not going to make that. Not unless you develop dancing shoes.

There was no -- there was lots of mention about access monies funds available. Well, it wasn't available. I would like to see us take the modems that Comcast and others place and get a revenue from, and take that and add it to the revenue for these access centers.

You may not know it, but outside of the big cities this -- we just came from a national conference, this state has to-die-for public access stations, but if they don't have the revenues to do this work, the lights are going to go out.

I know a lot of the access centers here have only a G or a P. We are a full pay public, educational, and general.
We have run out -- we have public, educational, and general, PEG.

We have run out of both bandwidth, because of the niggardly way in which Comcast services their access people. I get 25 percent from my home. I'm four blocks from the State Capitol. 25 percent of ECFiber is currently delivering to the home and I'm paying through the nose.

There is, if you know your history in Vermont, two of you guys weren't around, and the other guy, where, in Alabama or Mississippi? The history of Vermont was a backwater slap-jawed bunch of ignoramuses. We don't care, it's a beautiful vacation place. But in the teens and the '20s, all we had were dirt roads on a good day.

I remember when the last segment of Route 2 -- you will find this hard to believe I am that old, yes. The last segment of Route 2 was paved. I remember when 12 going north, north side of Worcester, was dirt. And when the crick rose you lost the road. It was Phil Penderson Hauf who said, damn it, we're going to connect Morrisville to
Montpelier by hook or by crook, and blast a lot of ledge. But it was a brick road like a lot of them were. People couldn't get their milk to the rail station. They couldn't get their grain to the grainer.

We decided as a society, not as a private enterprise venture, as a public society that we would build roads. And we taxed ourselves for them because the government back in those days didn't give you much money. They don't give you much now, if you count inflation.

We said it is for the common good. And I want you folks to get back to the root meaning of the common good. Or as an old farmer friend of mine said, I'm really common, we need to take the bull by the horns and not hide behind, oh, I can't do this, I can't do that.

If a bunch of hillbillies in East Central Vermont can string fiber with some help from the state after a long period of hitting us in the head, and they gave the 133 million to our friends to the south who are going to give us magic dishes, it was almost
like 30 pieces of stone that we traded.

I said at that hearing, and I have that tape and I will loan you a copy, when he stood up and told us the wonders of the world were coming, and a little old lady from Craftsbury said, that is wonderful, I can now send my grandchildren's pictures, can't I? He said, no, lady. I got it on film. This isn't me talking.

Another woman got up and said I'm a practicing ophthalmologist. I can move slides, records; right? He said, no, lady, this is not broadband.

Now I know a lot of stuff that's being going on. One of them is that a wireless system is basically an FM signal. And when it hits a piece of granite it bounces like a rubber ball. If it hits a heavy canopy, it bounces. Because it only goes in one direction, straight.

Now, putting all our eggs in that basket seems a little ridiculous to me. We have so much dark fiber. We have, I forget how many million were given to the utilities so they can electronically read the meters. Remember
that? But you can carry a hell of a lot more on a fiber than just a meter reader.

We didn't step up to the plate and say, okay, we're here for getting this grant, however, you are going to have to do this, this, and this in the public interest for the common good.

I besiege you to go back and look at this stuff and say, okay, we can do better. And we don't need a hundred million dollars tomorrow. And it doesn't take ten years. I'm proposing two years.

And I don't want to hear anymore about aspiration. My aspirational taxes turn out to be real money. And a statute is a statute until changed by the legislature and it's not an aspirational statute.

So let's quit playing games with each other. We're good at it, but let's stop it. Let's start saying how we hitch up Vermont like we did in the 19th Century and the 20th Century with decent roads that were all-season roads is what they called them, and incite the REA. Well, I'm old enough to remember in my rural community when the REA
arrived, seven farmers arrived on a hay wagon
and a mule to steep up the cedar posts and
they strung wire.

So I don't know why you are prejudice or
you are seeming prejudice, let's put it this
way, against municipalities. They are the
energetic ones. Municipalities can borrow
money for sewer lines and God knows what
else. If the statutes need to be tweaked,
let's tweak them. Let's quit saying, oh, I
can't do that because.

While we're doing all this Comcast is
trying to figure out how to pull the plug so
that they don't have the responsibility for
maintaining funding for the pay stations.

You don't have to take my word for it.

Sitting in Philadelphia, and I looked down
the street next to a 55-floor aluminum
ovalusk and they are going to build another
one right across the street and they have a
net profit margin of 12 percent. I know a
lot of businesses in Vermont that would be
real happy with twelve percent net.

We are dealing with a monster because
when they are done with us, it will be like
last year's hay left in the rain. And we are
going to be swinging from our sweet all
togethers by not having a covertly plan for
Telecom.

Eight years ago I bought VoIP telephone
For $30 a month I have worldwide coverage.
They will probably review their rates and
raise them. But because FairPoint and Bell
became such rutty bastards and service was so
bad and so expensive, that I disconnect and I
haven't had a land line in going on eight
years. I'm not saying it's the best VoIP in
the world, but it was a hell of a lot cheaper
than $65 a month I started receiving from
FairPoint with crappy service.

I have children in Europe. I have
children on the west coast of Canada. So
this is a very economical way before we got
faced down on our Apple computers.

But as you've heard people are going to
be watching on computers, or little white
phones. Let's get ready for it. Let's build
the highway for the traffic that's busting to
get down it. And if you want to crack
poverty, and you did build a beautiful
trunkline from Hardwick to Newport, not
passing a single living being except the
squirrels. Who mapped that, I don't know.
It's okay. It's good. It's a piece of the
infrastructure and you wouldn't have the
Korean biotech company unless the gentlemen
up there Charter development could guarantee
high speed Internet.

Do we not own -- do we not owe to our
citizens and the people who pay your salaries
through the tax system at least as much as a
Korean biotech firm?

Let's get our priorities straight. And
that's why I urge you to take this plan back,
put it in the shredder because we want to
recycle always, and let's come out with a
plan that's got some balls to it, to put it
bluntly. All I've got is a bunch of wet
paper.

And I'm telling you right now we will
regret this time if we don't lay a foundation
for high speed Internet and Telecom. And the
high speed ought to be a minimum of a hundred
megabytes, not a maximum. Because with fiber
all you have to do is turn the laser button.
You don't rehang the stuff.

So I would like to see a really meaty
discussion about the real options we have
right now and quit letting some of the big
boys steal all the bacon out of the
smokehouse and then we yell we're hungry.

I will put it in folksy terms because we
don't want to be a technocrat, but this plan
doesn't cut it. And I strongly urge you to
call in the dogs, put the fire out, get
another plan up after you've heard all the
people who have fought for you and speak the
high speed connective. You will not have
economic development in, well, Green- -- it's
down there below Chelsea. You won't have it
in Lowell. You won't have it in a lot of
places unless there is connectivity in which
people can market their product and their
skills.

If you want to stop -- of young people,
forget Burlington, they are hanging on to
them, but every place else in the state we're
running down the road after Johnny and Mary
and saying, oh, no, come back, come back.
My -- left because there was no advantage.

Could'n't be here if we're doing the kind of things we are doing. Because there is no real Internet connection.

Let's stop our stupid way we're making policy on behalf of the public that pay in the 99.9 percent of the money. Comcast pays very little because they are very bright lawyers, they've got 15 floors of lawyers.

And let's start saying what's good for Vermont, not what's good for Comcast or the rest of them. And if it gives them a saddle sore, too bad, let them ride out of town. I mean that.

There's ways to string networks that are strong, stand up to our inclement weather. We have some wicked weather. And benefit those folks in these lovely small towns.

Hardwick still doesn't have high speed Internet, even though the hub the state paid for it to go to Newport is right there. And they are really some hurting folks. It, by the way, is one of the most interesting small towns in Vermont right now when you talk about innovation.
I can think of four or five corporations there that are doing some fantastic work. They have no connectivity.

That's the end of my beef with you.

MR. PORTER: Thank you.

JOHN BLOCH: And it is with you, you know. I wrote the governor off after he sent the Sweet Mary Jane letter to Comcast as head of the Democratic Governor's Convention. You may not have seen it, but it's coming down the pipeline.

ANDY BEHRENS: My name is Andy Behrens, that's B-, might be boring, -e-h-r-e-n-s. And I live in South Strafford. And until my retirement I was a network engineer for Burlington Coat Factory and maintained computer networks for a 400-store chain.

I am going to primarily address two points in this report. One is the part that says every address should have four meg down, one meg up service. I strongly support the every address part of the statement.

The Connect America Fund issued grants that provided service to at least one location, a new Census Block. Census Blocks
around where we live can be many square miles big and you may have one inch of that block on a highway getting service and the rest of that block being back roads around the perimeter. And those roads have no service at all. So I definitely agree with the every address portion.

I think, furthermore, that that should be determined by an actual service and not communications companies saying according to our maps we predict that we have coverage in this area. Because I know that they've done that. I look at the official state maps and they are showing coverage at my house when I can tell you there is no coverage.

As for the second half of that statement, that the service should be four meg down and one up, I think that's a minimum, but I think it's -- I think it's good enough for this year, but I don't think it will be good enough for one year out or even two years out.

I think a couple of reasons for that. My daughter is in high school now. And for her contemporary American studies course she
needed to watch four hours of videos and analyze them for gender stereo types and race stereo types. And we couldn't do that at our house because our service was so slow, so she had to drive into Norwich and hang out with one of her friends and watch TV at their house.

I can think of two friends of mine, one of them is a nationally known musician. He offers classes in playing the instruments that he is a teacher of. And he gets people, not just in this area, but from elsewhere in the country that come in to take his classes. And if there were really high speed service available, and this would have to be faster than one meg up, then he could do real-time video instruction.

Right now, even the places where there is good service, it's good for streaming. It's not -- it's not good enough for real-time video where he can watch somebody else, you know, fingering on the keyboard of their instrument and say, no, you need to move your hand, you know, over an inch in order to play this passage.
The other person, somebody who is no longer living in the area, she was a music editor who worked for primarily film companies. That she would take films and plays the music tracks on the films so that they lined up properly with whatever was going on in the action so that the emphasis in the music occurred right at the critical place on the action.

And for her to do that she needed to be downloading high quality audio and high quality video onto her system so she could do the editing. And instead of doing it at home she would make monthly trips to California, and New York, and London to do the editing and work there in the studio. And it would have been wonderful for her if she would have been able to do that at home.

She finally decided that traveling was just too much for her and she moved to New York City. And that's a shame because that would have been, you know, a good business to be doing in a farmhouse in Vermont.

The second point I want to talk about is the statement that the marketplace should be
competitive. Now, my reading of competitive means that you can have at least two providers that you can play off against each other. And it seems to me that we have many places that have just one provider and many places that have no providers whatsoever.

And so a lot of these places are not in your downtown areas. You go to downtown Norwich or downtown Barre, I'm sure there is no problem to have the phone companies with fast DSL. You have Comcast or other cable providers. But once you get out in the more rural parts of the state, like where I live, there is no Comcast service. We have DSL at my house, but it's the end of the DSL line so the service, according to FairPoint's calculations, is about 1.5 meg down at my house and about 1.0 meg down for my neighbors a little further away.

And so, effectively, we don't have either of those. I get service from WaveComm. And that is when it works decent enough for my needs, not anywhere close to four megabyte, but fast enough that I can get by.
But people living on the next road are in a place that is showered from WaveComm's transmitters so they don't get the service at all.

And the VTel service that was promised to hit every house in the state doesn't seem to have materialized at all. And I guess I can't blame you guys for that because I think most of their money was federal grant money. But, nevertheless, I went to the meeting that Bernie Sanders convened three or perhaps four years ago.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Four and a half.

ANDY BEHRENES: Four and a half years ago?

MR. PORTER: In Randolph?

ANDY BEHRENES: Yeah. And, you know, I asked Mr. Catay whether their wireless service, whether they would, in fact, promise to have it cover every house in the state. And he waffled. And I asked him twice and he would not commit to that. And, to be honest, I don't -- I haven't seen it yet. It's well past their deadline for service. And so, you know, I sort of wonder where all that money
went to.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Relax, broadband gets suspended then you can get it.

(Numerous speakers speaking)

ANDY BEHRENS: Yeah, I think especially in cases where there is no commercial company like FairPoint that is actually providing the service, then the state should encourage alternatives like musical systems. And it appears this is going to require an act of a legislature to allow those. Or to allow towns to raise money to support their own, yeah.

MR. PORTER: Let me say two quick things. The VTel project which you referenced is one of the fundamental issues of this plan because you are correct. That project is to cover thousands and thousands of people. He just turned on his first site, not exactly the time table that we were looking for. And so until we literally know what's built and what it's covering, it's a little hard to advocate for committing state college that's already funded by the federal government. It's a problem. We hope
that project will finish up as I believe he has to finish it up.

Your second question is about the municipally owned. Municipalities in Vermont certainly can own and operate telecommunications companies. They cannot pledge the tax dollars. Any money has to be based on the revenues generated, so that's -- there is not a bar against it today. The problem is how it can be funded.

ANDY BEHRENS: Right, but that's a high bar for us to set up a communication system that requires fairly large capital expenses. And I believe that current law doesn't allow towns to issue bonds to support that.

MR. PORTER: I think they can issue revenue bonds; is that right, only against the -- of the company which there has to be a business passed in order to do it.

But as we said earlier, what you are talking about is exactly one of the things I think were intended in setting up this connectivity fund, and that's a good point. We are glad to hear it.

ANDY BEHRENS: Okay. Thank you.
MR. PORTER: Thank you.

Can I ask you one last question? When you talked about, did you go to the broadband VT.org website when you were talking earlier about the website saying you had service and you are, like, no, I don't?

ANDY BEHRENS: I have not recently.

MR. PORTER: One thing, if you have done that, there is a place on that website or it's very helpful to us when we hear from people who have been to the website and they say about having service and I don't. Just to let you know, we would love to hear from you about the address.

ANDY BEHRENS: Okay. Yeah, I did that.

MR. PORTER: You did it on the website?

ANDY BEHRENS: Yes, I suspect there are many hundreds of other people who aren't covered who don't know about the fact that they can go to the website and do that.

Okay. Thanks.

MR. PORTER: Thank you.

BRAN TOWBIN: My name is Bran, B-r-a-n; Towbin, T-o-w-b-i-n. I'm a member of the CVTV board as well as the selectman in
Plainfield. And I've spoken to both my
interactions with telephone company, with
VTel, Sovernet, and Charter Communications.

I think listening to everybody so far I
hear a similar pattern theme development.
And the theme is that the large entities feel
they can absolutely run roughshod over the
local municipality and the community. That's
what I am hearing.

I have not read the telecommunications
plan. In listening to you speak, I'm a bit
dismayed. I would like to quote
Frank Underwood from the popular TV series,
House of Cards. House of Cards is, you know,
obviously fiction. I don't mean this
literally, but there is a scene in which
Frank Underwood comes face to face with a
billionaire who is pushing him around. And
Frank Underwood's response is: You have all
the money, but I have all the guys who have
badges and guns.

Now, that's extreme, but what's lacking
here is a sense of fear on the part of the
large corporations pushing the small
Vermonters around. And I would remind you
that you guys are the State. I'm sure in some sense you feel hamstrung because these are Federal entities with lots of dollars can push you around. But just remember you are the State. You are the voice of people. And if one of these -- I have nothing -- I want to state very clearly, I have nothing against people who are making a lot of money and being good capitalists. It's not that they have Comcast making $30 million last year is the problem. It's not that they have Charter Communications making a million dollars last year. That's not a problem. It's not a problem when the guy who owns VTel has a house in Greenwich, Connecticut. That's not a problem. The problem is those profits, that money, seems to be on the back of local boys. That's the problem. And it's your responsibility in this plan to make sure that they are nervous when they deal with you. I don't sense that they are. And I think that you guys should really think hard about how to empower yourselves. What are their pressure points? That's the way they are looking at you and that's the way they are
looking at us.

So that's the way you have to look at them. You have to really think very hard about what legislative tools can bring them to get service to Tunbridge. This is 2014. It's not that hard. And it's not a question of resources.

Let's be very clear. You know the cable industry for those of you who are not informed, the cable industry fought very hard and has on the cable bill how much your public access costs. Maybe we ought to have a law that says how much of your cable bill is going toward executive compensation. And I think then people would get the idea what the problem is. It's not the public accesses bankrupting the cable companies.

So I hope that you guys are embolden to act very hard on the behalf of the public.

(Applause)

(Speakers speaking all at once)

MR. PURVIS: We have people who haven't spoken yet tonight.

TONY CAMPOS: I will be brief. Tony Campos, CVTV. One of the things that we have
partnership with Charter Communication. They embraced our service because they had to because they had to carry us. And we were in competition with Dish Network that didn't carry local access. So Charter embraced us and used us to market their services over Dish.

Now, let's put them all in the same playing field. Let's make competition, make Dish carry us, make them give high speed Internet and you will see.

And now I'm going to quote my favorite movie: Greed, greed is good.

MR. PURVIS: Charlie, would you like to speak?

CHARLIE LARKIN: Charlie Larkin.

I have a couple of documents in this hearing to put in the record.

I am with this gentleman here.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm going to move back so I can get your good profile.

CHARLIE LARKIN: Alternative ways --

MR. PURVIS: I think you might have turned the mic off, Charlie. We can't hear you.
CHARLIE LARKIN: I want to talk about alternative ways that I don't think the plan considered. One is I have been told there's some 45 to $50 million that may be available to Vermont under the Connect America program, which I can understand is managed by the FCC, and will offer, in effect, the right of first refusal in our state if FairPoint can construct more DSL and copper supporting 4:1 or even 10:1 speeds instead of fiber. Fiber is the only infrastructure that can meet the State's 202D goal of 100 megabytes per second or faster, symmetrical speeds.

The ill-considered build-out of what would be, soon to be, obsolete infrastructure, is in direct conflict with the goals of 30 V.S.A. 202, quote, result in widespread installation of technology that becomes outmoded within a short period after installation.

So I would suggest first that the Public Service Board and Department, legislature and individual legislators, interested citizens, businesses and organizations, should petition the FCC not to grant this money to FairPoint.
The funds should be granted to the State with specific conditions. These monies should be placed in revolving loan fund usable over and over again to build much more than 45, $50 million of ADSL and copper, but to build wall-to-wall fiber across Vermont. We should all ask our Congressional Delegation for help on this.

The DPS should also use the power granted under 30 V.S.A. 202(d) to require all network owners to provide specific location and capacity information regarding their fiber networks. A map showing the location of all fiber could then be used to create an inverse map showing where fiber is not located or is at capacity. All fiber built under the Revolving Loan Fund would only be constructed in fiber free areas to prevent further overbuilds.

The EC Fiber construction method should be an example of what could be done. I understand that they have ability, not considering any help, they were able to reduce their cost by connecting us to VTA connector, but in general costing them $30 a
mile, $30,000 a mile, in areas that could not
connect to the VTA fiber. This was in areas
down to six homes per mile, $30,000. Six
homes is $5,000 per mile per home.

At $100 per subscriber per month, this
comes to $1200 per year or 4800 in four
years. That's a pretty good payback time.
Even at $50 a subscriber would be paid back
in eight years.

Should some portion of these amounts be
returning to the revolving fund, more
communities would then benefit from the same
fund resulting in meeting the goals of
symmetrical statewide fiber possibly by 2024,
if not closer.

The estimated costs, benefits and job
creation potential of such a scenario should
be laid out in detail in a Ten Year
Telecommunication Plan.

I also understood that our libraries,
state libraries, are hooked up and hardly a
megabyte I believe is per second. Fiber
network to some 43 libraries, all the state
libraries, and the some of the public
libraries. This cost is good for casting
video programing across. This looks like an improved and much better VIT which is only 17 locations with inferior connections. Perhaps we should consider taking VIT by fault and let its funding be given to the libraries to build to connect all the libraries in the state, not just the ones of 43. Both of those have possible legal, economical, or other areas which might cause them to fail, but they should at least have been looked at and shown in the plan why they would not work.

Thank you for your time.

MR. PURVIS: Thank you.

JOHN BLOCH: You need --

THE REPORTER: I can't remember names. Could you tell me your name, please?

JOHN BLOCH: I'm terribly sorry. John Bloch, 7 Liberty Street.

You need to know the history of why the federal government put up money for the REA electrical connections. The investor owned utilities, that's putting a nice gloss to it, refused to go outside the center of towns just as Comcast does in Worcester, Calais,
Middlesex. I'll just keep it real close to home. Ten miles from the State Capitol people are using dial-up because these profiteers, I can't make any money if I go up these roads. Oh, come on.

ECFiber makes money. And they go up some pretty rough terrain. And the help of building those circuits is enormously helpful, but in this day and age ten miles from the state capitol and have to use dial-up and I'm ashamed. When somebody asks us how -- and then the plan comes out and 99 percent are covered. No, we're not. Come on. You know that. I will get the map and show you. I only have to come up with 6,000 named to get under the 90 percent.

So let's not keep on telling these fairy tales or bedtime stories. Let's put some grit and some teeth into what we're doing, please.

MR. PURVIS: Thank you.

STEVEN WHITAKER: I will make one comment very brief.

THE REPORTER: Can I have your name, please?
STEVEN WHITAKER: Steven Whitaker.

I would like to use an analogy I think that we often are hearing again and again that we don't have the authority to regulate broadband services, information services. But we do have a right to regulate our right-of-way, and the pole attachments, and the dark fiber that is spun and hung on those.

There is no information services flowing over dark fiber. And they are utilizing public right-of-way. And we need some aggressive lawyering, we need some strong public advocacy to rewrite this plan. Smirk free. All right. Thank you.

MR. PURVIS: Would anyone else like to speak? Gentleman back there. Do him a favor, and bring the mic back there for me. Thank you.

CHUCK SHERMAN: Chuck Sherman. I would like to share two happiest times. One was seeing my granddaughter on FaceTime just as smooth and clear as talking with you here.

The other was calling FairPoint and saying, please disconnect me, I have fiber
(Applause)

STEVE WHITAKER: Unlimited North America and Canada. Thank you.

MR. PURVIS: Yes?

HENRY SWAYZE: I just wonder if there are things we can do for you.

THE REPORTER: I'm sorry. I can't remember names.

HENRY SWAYZE: I just wonder if there are things we can do for you. You people, we're dumping this all back on you and saying, hey, do it. How do we get into something that really has, I mean, everybody is giving testimony, and I guess that's a help, but not --

MR. PORTER: I think the comments in and of themselves are helpful. And we're happy at anytime to discuss with you why the plan might be written one way or why something that sounds so good to a group of people can be very problematic.

And it's very helpful to know, you know, what people are thinking. We're going through the Charter CPG process right now.
And the, you know, the turnout for public access at those hearings is just amazing. And it's extremely helpful to us in that proceeding. This really isn't that different from that type of situation.

So, it's funny. I think so much energy in discussions, we're always thrilled of people who will talk with Telecom, with us, we're always available and always happy to have the discussion.

CHARLIE LARKIN: Where are you holding the St. J. hearing?

MR. PURVIS: It's at the Catamount Art Center. I believe it's on Farrell Street. I'm sorry, that's the one in Rutland. It is listed in the Caledonian-Record and we will have the address available on our website.

CHARLIE LARKIN: Thank you.

MR. PURVIS: Yeah, it's at the Catamount Art Center. That's Thursday, September 4th, at 7:00 p.m.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Could you restore the video from the first hearing back to your website and correct it's a ten-year plan, not a seven-year plan?
MR. PURVIS: Yeah, we can look into that. That would be -- yeah, we would have to talk to VIT about that.

JOHN BLOCH: Can we expect a more vigorous enforcement of public right-of-way and the whole --

MR. PORTER: I will tell you what, once the hearing is over I will be more than happy to have a discussion with anyone that would like to know about that issue and others.

JOHN BLOCH: That's our property; it's not Comcast's property.

MR. PORTER: Well, no, that's right. I would be happy to have that discussion after the hearing if you like.

JOHN BLOCH: Fair enough.

MR. PURVIS: If there are no more further comments, I think we can conclude this meeting. Thank you very much.

(WHEREUPON, the Public Hearing was adjourned at approximately 8:35 p.m.)
CERTIFICATE

I, Deborah J. Slinn, Certified Shorthand Reporter, certify:

That the foregoing proceedings were reported stenographically by me at the time and place herein set forth;

That the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of my shorthand notes so taken;

That I am not a relative or employee of any attorney of the parties nor financially interested in the action.

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Deborah J. Slinn
Registered Professional Reporter
Certified Shorthand Reporter

My commission expires February 10, 2015.