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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

**Lt. Governor Molly Gray Joins Vermont Leaders for Broadband Roundtable
Hosted by Senator Leahy**

Montpelier, Vt. – On Wednesday, Lt. Governor Gray participated in a virtual discussion on broadband with other Vermont leaders. The event was hosted by Senator Patrick Leahy.

Lt. Governor Gray joined Rep. Peter Welch, Governor Phil Scott, Speaker of the House Jill Krowinski, President Pro Tempore Becca Balint, Evan Carlson of the NEK Communication Union District, and Kurt Gruending of Waitsfield Valley Telecom. Representative Tim Briglin moderated the discussion.

In her remarks, Lt. Governor Gray elevated the voices of Vermonters she has heard from over the last year and stressed the need to adopt a short-term solution to address emergency broadband access for all Vermonters, while longer-term permanent solutions are deployed over the coming years.

“For the roughly 60,000 Vermont homes and businesses without access to broadband, each day of this pandemic has been a day without equity in access to online learning, remote work, telehealth, mental health and support services, government resources, civic engagement and much more.”

Additionally, the Lt. Governor spoke to the need to frame the broadband conversation as one that prioritizes the accessibility and affordability needs of Vermonters and in the short-term does not promote one technology over another.

“While I agree with the long-term proposals put forward to build-out permanent broadband infrastructure, these proposals cannot come at the expense of delaying access for those who continue to go without. I encourage an immediate, short-term companion plan to rapidly and urgently identify all the tools at our disposal to offer emergency broadband access now to those in need.”

The Lt. Governor also shared the story of a Worcester family who went to great lengths during recent months to access broadband. The McLane’s converted their family car into a ‘classroom’

with a toddler table and chair with the legs ‘chainsawed off’ and drove to the Doty Elementary School parking lot each day to access the internet. During colder days they had to keep the engine idling to stay warm.

“Like many parents, because of poor internet access at their home, Matt and Megan took matters into their own hands to meet their professional obligations and the needs of their children. ...[their] story is one of many across rural Vermont.”

A recording of the live event is available to view online, [here](#).

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