

## **Theresa Utton-Jerman**

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**Subject:** Communications Union Districts - Testimony

On Behalf of the newly former Otter Creek Communications Union District we would like to enter in to the record the following comment:

**The need for reliable, high speed internet is greater now more than ever. If Vermont's citizens and businesses are to not only be able to weather potential future isolation, but also remain competitive with the rest of the country or the global economy... sufficient internet for all needs to be established. In Rutland alone, if we were to look at the entire county, we have 1312 road miles. A pole data collection survey can cost \$600 mile. The Make-Ready phase can cost \$6000-\$12000 per mile. By the time we would get to actual construction if we were looking at the entire region, we would be looking at \$20,000 to \$35,000 per mile of our 1312 road miles. Yes, there are ways to bring down some of these costs by collaborating with Vermont utilities. But the cost to connect Vermont with the world through reliable internet and support Vermonters' competitiveness is great, to say the least. The bare minimum that the State government should commit is the proposed \$2 million for CUDs to further internet projects. If the State can't provide internet infrastructure to its citizens, then it should at least fund those that are willing to do the work.**

Bill Moore, Chair

Cassandra Hayes, Vice-Chair

Amanda O'Connor, Member-at-large