



Josh Arneson &lt;jarneson@richmondvt.gov&gt;

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## Letter of Support For Fiber-optic Internet Grant Funding For Richmond

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Nishi, Roger &lt;rnishi@corp.wcvt.com&gt;

Fri, Jan 21, 2022 at 5:33 PM

To: "jarneson@richmondvt.gov" <jarneson@richmondvt.gov>, "christine.werneke@richmondvt.org" <christine.werneke@richmondvt.org>

Hi Josh and Christine,

I should know better than to send an email on a Friday after 5:00. I meant to send it much earlier in the day, but got distracted and didn't hit send. By the time you see this, I hope you can say it's Monday and that you had a good weekend.

Happy New Year! As you know, Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom has been making considerable progress expanding high-speed fiber-optic internet availability in the communities we serve. We are also applying for state grant funding to accelerate our fiber builds and need your assistance.

Building a fiber-to-the-home network in rural areas is extremely expensive, and takes time to engineer, construct and build. In 2022, we are spending almost \$10 million to convert as many customers to fiber as we can. We are currently seeking broadband grant funding from the State of Vermont's Community Broadband Board (VCBB) for \$141,875 that would complement our investments and help to accelerate fiber expansion in your town. In addition, the VCBB has created a community match that has a budget of \$16 Million. If Richmond has State Fiscal Recovery Funds that it would like to contribute to assist in the building of fiber in your community, the VCBB will match up to \$22,700.

**We are asking your help in sending a letter of support of our grant request to the State of Vermont on behalf of Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom. Attached is a draft template for your letter.**

At Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom, we understand the critical role we play in connecting your community to high-speed Internet. The pandemic has certainly elevated the importance of rural broadband and the critical role it plays for our customers and the communities we serve. As a 118-year old, local Vermont, family-owned business, we take the obligation to serve our customers seriously.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions you have. We truly appreciate your support as we work together to build fiber-optic broadband throughout your community.

Sincerely,

Roger Nishi  
Vice President – Industry Relations  
Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom

(802)496-8336  
[rnishi@corp.wcvt.com](mailto:rnishi@corp.wcvt.com)

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2 attachments



**WCVT Overview of Vermont Community Broadband Board Grant Process.docx**  
32K



**Draft VCBB Letter of Support.docx**  
22K



## Overview of Vermont Community Broadband Board Grant Process and Letter of Support

The State of Vermont, through the Vermont Community Broadband Board, is currently accepting grant applications, part of Act 71 Broadband Construction Program. Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom will be submitting a grant application for the towns in our service area that are not part of a Communications Union District (CUD). One-hundred percent of any grant funds received for your town will be used to build and convert additional customers in your town to fiber-optics.

- Every grant dollar we receive will be used to build fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) to qualifying locations and will be capable of supporting synchronous Internet speeds up to 1Gbps.
- Qualifying locations in your town include those without access to a wireline connection of at least 25/3 Mbps and are considered underserved; and eligible for the grant program. Locations with fiber availability do not qualify under this grant program.
- In addition to the \$141,875, the VCBB has allocated for construction in Richmond, the VCBB has created a community match that has a budget of \$16 Million. If Richmond has State Fiscal Recovery Funds that it would like to contribute to assist in the building of fiber in your community, the VCBB will match up to \$22,700. This portion of the program is on a first-come, first-serve basis, so timing is critical.
- Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom qualifies for funding under Act 71 as a small communications carrier. *Please note: Under Act 71, Municipalities are not considered eligible applicants, but are encouraged to actively work with a local service provider to apply for funding.*
- The application window for grants is now open and applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. WCVT plans to submit our completed grant application in February.

We ask for your letter in support of our grant application. Please include the following items in your letter of support:

1. Letter is due February 11, 2022 mailed and sent via email to Christine Hallquist and Robert Fish at the VCBB. Their email addresses are: [christine.hallquist@vermont.gov](mailto:christine.hallquist@vermont.gov); [robert.fish@vermont.gov](mailto:robert.fish@vermont.gov)
2. Vermont Community Broadband Board  
Christine Hallquist, Executive Director and Robert Fish, Deputy Director  
112 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05620-2601
3. Please include the following content – you may use the attached template as a guide for your letter of support.
  - How your town can benefit from receiving grant funds to build additional fiber in your community and why working with a local provider is the best way to achieve this.
  - Any alignment with goals in your town plan should be highlighted.

Any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to any of us:

**Roger Nishi**, Vice President – Industry Relations, (802) 496-8336, [rnishi@corp.wcvt.com](mailto:rnishi@corp.wcvt.com)

**Kurt Gruendling**, Vice President of Marketing, (802) 496-8305, [kgruendling@corp.wcvt.com](mailto:kgruendling@corp.wcvt.com)

**Kris Merchant**, Sales Manager, (802) 496-8554, [kmerchant@corp.wcvt.com](mailto:kmerchant@corp.wcvt.com)