

Comments to Vermont Enhanced E-911 Board on Proposed Outage Reporting Rule

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed “Rule Governing Outage Reporting Requirements for Originating Carriers and Electric Power Companies” required in Act 79. It is helpful to build accountability within the information structure surrounding E-911 service outages. My comments are aimed to improve Vermont E-911.

Context:

As I write, our area served by VTel, without mobile access, is in a major January snowstorm. Up until the major error promulgated by VTel for fiber optics, telephone service was rarely a concern for us. Today, with heavy snow, access to E-911 is of course a concern. Less than a month ago, I had occasion to call E-911 in a life-threatening situation. The response from our volunteer ambulance service was prompt. I traveled from RRMC to DHMC via helicopter and did well. Today, I am concerned that those who need E-911 have access to it.

Overall:

I commend those involved for requiring and gathering ongoing information to define the length of time as well as circumstances surrounding E-911 outages. For this action to be more than just another data collection mechanism, there needs to be a well-defined process for moving throughout Vermont toward 100% access 24/7 to E-911—whether this be through old or new technology or elements cobbled together. Vermonters should not be at the mercy of those who make decisions outside of their well-being and particularly regarding services that are taxpayer funded.

Thus, Sections 4.0 and 5.0 of the Proposed Outage Reporting Rule must also call for Originating Carriers and Electric Power Companies to work with the E-911 Board to devise and install solutions to reduce outages and their impacts on Vermonters.

Respectfully submitted,
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