



**TIM BOELL, VP  
DISTRIBUTION AND MARKETING**

**CELL: 917.880.8619  
TBOELL@OUTDOORCHANNEL.COM**

**MITCH JONES, COORDINATOR  
DISTRIBUTION AND MARKETING**

**CELL: 303.615.8819  
MITCHELL.JONES@OUTDOORCHANNEL.COM**



**NewsClips**

**June 21, 2019**

**Politico**  
NBC grapples with  
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**New York Times**  
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Candidates, and C-  
Span Can't Do Live  
Coverage

**Pittsburgh  
Tribune-Review**

Vermont Republican Gov. Phil Scott signed a bill into law on Thursday aimed at getting broadband to all rural areas of the state. The legislation supports community efforts to design and build broadband networks, like EC Fiber, a nonprofit, community owned fiber-optic network available in 22 member towns. The measure provides technical assistance as well as grants for communities to do feasibility studies on how to build and pay for broadband. "This is a bill that is empowering our citizens to solve this problem," said Independent Rep. Laura Sibilia of Dover, where Scott signed the bill. She noted that the state cannot force providers to offer the service and it lacks the more than \$600 million needed to build out a fiber network.

The money for some aspects would come from a slight increase in a phone tax. The legislation also provides loans to community efforts and internet service providers to reach those underserved areas and adds

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**Philadelphia Daily News**  
[REAL ID column uncovers more problems in Pa.](#)

**Allentown Morning Call**  
[Gerrymandering breeds 'a loss of faith.' Thornburgh says](#)

**Philadelphia Inquirer**  
[Editorial: The stakes are huge in Philly and Pa. if we don't get the census right](#)

money for match grants for providers. According to Department of Public Service data, 7% of Vermont households lack the most basic high-speed internet access and nearly 20% do not have access to modern internet speeds, lawmakers say. Many Vermonters in rural areas only have landline service, with no cellphone service and little internet, Sibilia said. "There's a lot of vulnerability that is in the future for rural areas if we don't act," she said.

Broadband service is also important to reducing social isolation in older residents, said AARP Vermont, a strong advocate for the bill. "Being able to send emails and engage in social media allows older Vermonters to stay connected to family and friends, access online newspapers and magazines and be a part of the digital world we all live in today," said AARP Vermont State Director Greg Marchildon. – **Associated Press**

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U.S. wireless companies' limited access to some of the nation's most valuable airwaves threatens to slow down their plans to build faster 5G networks. At issue are broad swaths of the radio spectrum in frequencies that can travel long distances and penetrate buildings. This "mid-band" is considered ideal for faster, fifth-generation wireless service. "Mid-band is in the sweet spot in terms of what's most valuable to wireless operators," said Walt Piecyk, an analyst at investment bank BTIG, in part because carriers can deploy those frequencies atop existing cell towers, rather than blanketing neighborhoods with hundreds or thousands of new antennas. While U.S. officials take their time making mid-band airwaves available to carriers, he said, "[a lot of countries](#) are auctioning off that spectrum."

Sprint Corp. and Dish Network Corp. already hold large amounts of mid-band spectrum not yet put to work serving customers. Other nearby frequencies remain reserved for satellite communications and military use in the U.S. Telecom companies have spent more than \$25 billion over the past three years to [snap up wireless-airwave licenses](#) beyond the mid-band range, targeting [both high and low extremes](#) considered useful for carrying wireless data.

Verizon Communications Inc. and AT&T Inc. have launched 5G services in a few cities using high-frequency millimeter wave spectrum that provides ultrafast speeds but can't travel long distances and is limited in its ability to penetrate hard materials like walls. AT&T promises to offer nationwide 5G in the first half of 2020 over spectrum licenses it already controls. Company technology chief Andre Fuetsch said more mid-band spectrum under FCC consideration "would help round out our current holdings" and speed up that 5G expansion.

The Federal Communications Commission unveiled a plan Tuesday to commercialize licenses in the Educational Broadband Service. The service was created in the 1960s for use by educational groups for instructional television, and some licenses are now used for wireless broadband systems for school districts. Some of the airwaves, which are above 2.5 gigahertz and often lumped in with mid-band spectrum, are used by federally recognized Native American tribes in rural areas of the U.S.

The FCC's plan aims to make available to wireless companies and other businesses some unused or underused swaths of that spectrum. Schools that currently use some airwaves can continue to use their

licenses, expand that use or sell them, a senior FCC official said. Tribal groups also maintain priority access. WISPA, a trade body for fixed wireless broadband companies, said the move would expand broadband coverage, including in rural areas.

Mariel Triggs, chief executive of Mural Net, an organization that is building a wireless network to serve the Havasupai tribe in the Grand Canyon, called the move “a major step forward in the effort to close the digital divide in rural America, especially for Indian Country.” Some educational groups oppose the FCC’s plan. A spokeswoman for the Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband Coalition called it “disastrous for online learning, 5G deployment and rural consumers.”

Even with the FCC’s efforts, agency officials cautioned the new rules would take time to implement. New mid-band auctions won’t start until after the commission finishes selling more millimeter-wave licenses at the end of this year. Executives of T-Mobile US Inc. and Sprint have seized on delays in making spectrum available to argue for approval of their more than \$26 billion merger. The companies say joining forces would save them billions of dollars each year that could be invested in new equipment that uses Sprint’s 2.5 gigahertz licenses. “Here in the U.S., we have this mid-band dilemma,” T-Mobile technology chief Neville Ray said in an April conference call with analysts. “We can solve that.”

But T-Mobile’s plan to cover rural areas using Sprint spectrum also faces obstacles. A group of state attorneys general sued last week to block the merger, arguing the arrangement would raise prices for cellphone service, especially among low-cost plans. The Justice Department hasn’t issued a public decision on the proposed merger. Other wireless industry experts cite opportunities above 3.5 gigahertz, where several other countries have marked frequencies for 5G use. Those frequencies, too, are tied up by competing interests in the U.S.

The Citizens Band Radio Service is a cluster of radio channels that offers companies or individuals access to frequencies above 3.5 gigahertz, provided they register their use with an online system designed to prevent them from interfering with Navy radar signals. Nearby on the spectrum, TV broadcasters, cable companies and other users receive satellite signals on the C-Band. A coalition of satellite companies called the C-Band Alliance floated a plan last week to squeeze those satellite customers into a narrower band that makes room for cellphone companies willing to pay billions of dollars for desirable spectrum.

That plan, too, would take months to put spectrum on the market but is still the quickest option available to avoid cutting off customers who run the gamut from cable-TV providers to Mormon churches, according to C-Band Alliance vice president Peter Pitsch. “We’re under contract to a lot of those folks,” Mr. Pitsch said. “We want to keep good faith with them, keep them whole.”

Verizon CEO Hans Vestberg met last week with FCC Chairman Ajit Pai and another agency official to ask the commission to make more mid-band spectrum available, according to a regulatory filing. The largest U.S. carrier told regulators that mid-band spectrum would help achieve broader coverage. “We’re interested in getting as much

spectrum in the marketplace as possible," Craig Silliman, Verizon's general counsel, told analysts Tuesday. — *Wall Street Journal*

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Q: I remember reading an article in the PG about WQED-TV being dropped from over-the-airwaves antennae starting today. The article (as I remember) said to reprogram my remote to fix the problem. I tried and did not have any success. Do you have any other suggestion? I looked at the station's website for any info about this latest innovation. I couldn't find any help there.

-- Lynne via email

Rob: Lynne was a little too early. **We reported WQED's frequency switch** begins June 27 at 8 a.m. and will be complete by July 1. During that period WQED's channels will not be available to those who receive the station over the air (none of this impacts cable/satellite subscribers). After July 1 over-the-air viewers – those using more modern TVs and those using an older TV connected to an analog-to-digital converter – will need to re-scan their channels to reacquire WQED at its new frequency. (A how-to re-scan video can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVxI6L9eCvk&feature=youtu.be>

And it's not just WQED. In total 13 Pittsburgh stations will transition to new frequencies, according to the FCC, including WPXI (Channel 11), WPGH (Channel 53), WPNT (Channel 22), WPCB (Channel 40) and multiple low-power stations. But it won't all happen at once, rather, over a period of months. If you find a station has disappeared, try re-scanning, but don't try until then. The FCC advises viewers using an antenna will need to re-scan more than once due to the rolling basis of the changes. For further assistance visit fcc.gov/TVrescan or call 1-888-225-5322 and press "6" to speak with a help desk representative.

— Rob Owen's "TV Q&A" column in *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

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Clout told you last summer that Bob Brady, chairman of the Democratic City Committee, was not the retiring type, even as the final days of his last term in the U.S. House were running out. Brady confirmed then that he was in the "very, very early ethically preliminary stages" of **taking a job as a consultant** for SugarHouse, the casino on a bank of the Delaware River in Fishtown.

It's a done deal. SugarHouse in March added Brady to its list of "licensed entity representatives" with the state Gaming Control Board. Brady told us the job became official last month. The former congressman is listed as the top guy at Robert A. Brady Consulting LLC, which lists a swanky address in an office building on Rittenhouse Square. That building, the Wellington, is also home to the law firm of Richard Sprague, a minority owner of SugarHouse and Brady's attorney.

We asked Brady what the job entails. "Whatever they want," he said, laughing. Brady, who calls Sprague "a dear friend," now has an office at the firm. "That's my guy," he said. "Mr. Sprague takes very good care of me." — Chris Brennan's "Clout" column in *Philadelphia Daily News*



**Broadband  
Cable Association  
of Pennsylvania**

127 State Street Harrisburg, PA 17101  
717-214-2000 (f) 717-214-2020  
[bcapa.com](http://bcapa.com)

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