

DT 16-872

From: Niles Donegan [mailto:bicoid@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 14, 2017 11:29 AM
To: PUC - OCA Website Mail Account
Subject: Public opinion meeting equivalents for Fairpoint merger

Good morning -

Fairpoint has a near-monopoly on internet in our town (no cable, and only line-of-site wireless providers offer marginal competition at twice the price) so the residents of Lyme have a variety of questions on this transaction that we were hoping to get answered before the merger is completed. An AP article in my local newspaper (attached) regarding Vermont's utility regulator gathering opinions regarding Fairpoint's merger with Consolidated made me wonder whether an equivalent public meeting was a possibility in New Hampshire. I noted that the PUC has limited power in addressing broadband issues, but perhaps an equivalent entity exists in New Hampshire that could receive input regarding this merger.

Best,
Niles Donegan
Lyme, NH

(1) Associated Press
MONTPELIER, VT.

Vermont's utility regulating Public Service Board is going to be collecting opinions about the proposed merger of FairPoint Communications with Consolidated Communications.

The first hearing is set for Feb. 15 at Montpelier's Union Elementary School. Additional hearings are scheduled for Feb. 21 in St. Johnsbury and March 2 in Bennington.

The Public Service Department, which represents consumers before the board, is encouraging Vermonters to provide input into the proposed merger, which must be approved by regulators.

FairPoint, which has a presence in 17 states, provides telephone and data service to customers in Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. FairPoint's largest network is in northern New England

It was announced in December that the Illinois-based Consolidated planned to buy FairPoint for \$1.5 billion.

It's hoped the deal can close by mid-year.

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