



**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF THE NEW ENGLAND CONNECTIVITY &  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION, INC. REGARDING HOUSE BILL No. 7173**

**February 3, 2026**

Dear Chair Solomon and distinguished Members of the House Corporations Committee,

On behalf of the New England Connectivity and Telecommunications Association (NECTA), I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony on House Bill No. 7173, relating to critical infrastructure.

House Bill 7173 would expand protections and penalties for vandalism and theft of critical infrastructure to include broadband, internet and wireless property. As telecommunications networks are essential to public safety and economic infrastructure, damage to facilities and property can disrupt emergency services, shut down businesses, and isolate communities. A single fiber cut can knock out service to thousands of residents, businesses, schools, and hospitals. Understanding the devastating impact of vandalism on telecommunications networks, NECTA supports the goals of this bill to strengthen state penalties and safeguards. Further, to ensure that all forms of telecommunications property is accounted for and protected, NECTA respectfully requests that the Committee amend the bill to include “cable” among the other communications technologies included in the bill.

NECTA would like to thank Representative Kennedy and the other bill sponsors for their work on this important issue. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

Timothy O. Wilkerson  
President

**About NECTA**

NECTA is a five-state regional trade association representing substantially all private cable broadband providers in Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont. In Rhode Island, NECTA represents Cox Communications. Cox produces an estimated \$850 million annually in economic activity in the state and employs over 600 Rhode Island residents generating over \$57 million in wage and salary payments.