



# Public Service Commission

For Immediate Release: 07/15/21

John B. Howard, Chair

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21073/20-C-0553

## PSC Decision Spurs Telephone Service Investment and Broadband Expansion

### *New Private-Sector Investment Gives 300+ Upstate Customers Broadband Service Access Telecommunications Investment to Benefit New York Customers*

**ALBANY** — The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today approved an investment in Consolidated Communications Holdings, LLC, (Consolidated) including its three upstate local telephone companies — Berkshire Telephone Corporation, Chautauqua and Erie Telephone Corporation, and Taconic Telephone Corp. The investment will be used to improve customer service in New York and expand the company’s broadband footprint by at least 300 customers in rural, upstate communities.

“High-speed internet is essential to our everyday lives, and we need to make sure every household has access to the internet,” **said Commission Chair John B. Howard.** “With this investment, Consolidated will improve its existing infrastructure to benefit customers. By accelerating its infrastructure build-out, Consolidated will expand its broadband footprint and significantly boost broadband speeds.”

The company-wide investment by Searchlight Capital Partners LP of \$425 million will enhance Consolidated’s national position, which in turn should place the company’s New York operating entities in a stronger position and allow them to increase their financial resources and enhance their business operations, including an expansion of fiber-based broadband services. The Commission’s approval of the investment was conditioned on Consolidated expanding its network to provide broadband access to unserved or underserved locations within its New York footprint.

Consolidated’s three New York local telephone companies operate in Columbia, Chautauqua, Rensselaer, and Dutchess counties, and serve a total of 14,831 residential and commercial customers in New York State. The largest subsidiary is Taconic, with more than 10,000 customers in the Hudson Valley area of eastern New York State.

Governor Cuomo’s comprehensive 2021 Connectivity Agenda builds on his work leading the nation in delivering equitable internet access for all New Yorkers. In 2015, the State undertook the largest and most ambitious broadband initiative in the nation, dedicating \$500 million to broaden internet access statewide. This investment, coupled with regulatory reforms, expanded the reach of broadband so today 98 percent of New York households have access to high-speed broadband with download speeds of at least 100 Mbps. Furthermore, the Governor took critical steps to tackle the digital divide in schools by signing the 2014 Smart Schools Bond Act. This Act made \$2 billion available to school

districts across the state for technology devices and classroom enhancements to improve school connectivity, making it possible for schools to weather today's challenges of remote learning.

Today's decision may be obtained by going to the Commission Documents section of the Commission's Web site at [www.dps.ny.gov](http://www.dps.ny.gov) and entering Case Number 20-C-0553 in the input box labeled "Search for Case/Matter Number". Many libraries offer free Internet access. Commission documents may also be obtained from the Commission's Files Office, 14th floor, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223 (518-474-2500). If you have difficulty understanding English, please call us at 1-800-342-3377 for free language assistance services regarding this press release.