

Jeff Jenkins-CWA

We are here to talk about broadband, which connects every one of us. I started as a service technician, then a cable splicer for Verizon, and retired with 25 years of service. Previously, I worked for MetroVision. I have performed installation and maintenance of coax, copper, and fiber networks.

I have three kinds of cables with me. This is a traditional copper wire used in regulated copper lines, coax used by cable providers, and fiber. When used for voice service, they all perform the same final function: connecting two people at the end of the line. But they do this via different technologies.

This is important because the copper wire is subject to state PSC oversight. If you face repeated outages and the provider is not responding to your concerns, you can file a complaint with the PSC to investigate. But if your voice service is via VoIP, the PSC does not have any authority to investigate the complaint and order corrective action.

During my career, I frequently heard from supervisors that we needed to respond to outage cases or tickets because the company needed to comply with PSC's service quality standards. Similarly, repairs to tickets were prioritized when the customer had filed a complaint with the PSC. This was not the case when responding to fiber tickets.

CWA members are the most highly-trained and experienced workforce in the broadband industry, with deep knowledge of deployment, maintenance, and customer support. We know the importance of a statewide agency with the authority to establish service quality standards, investigate broadband providers, respond to complaints, and ensure they have resilient infrastructure that will withstand disasters.

I support Maryland's legislative effort to promote public oversight of our communications networks in the digital age. We must ensure that networks are resilient and the voices of workers and consumers are heard.