

The Northern Border Regional Commission approved two Vermont projects for funding Wednesday.

Northern Vermont Fiber Optic Connection will receive \$234,000 and the Northern Forest Canoe Trail will receive \$141,150.

Vermont's federal delegation -- Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and Rep. Peter Welch, D-Vt. -- played key roles in authorization of the commission in the 2008 Farm Bill and securing \$1.5 million funding.

The Douglas administration recommended the projects because they would help boost the regional economy. The commission, made up of the governors of Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Maine and a chairman, also awarded grants to projects in Maine, New Hampshire and New York.

The Northern Community Investment Corp. of St. Johnsbury will use the \$234,000 to build out a fiber optic cable connection from Stanhope, Quebec, to Norton.

The Northern Forest Canoe Trail, based in Waitsfield, will use the \$141,150 to pay for signs and kiosks, and online planning tools to promote the use of the 740-mile inland paddling trail that traces historic travel routes across New York, Vermont, Quebec, New Hampshire and Maine.