



***Perspectives from FSF Scholars***  
***June 4, 2025***  
***Vol. 20, No. 25***

**National Broadband Theft and Vandalism:  
A Sample of Destructive Acts Since January**

by

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In January, I published a Free State Foundation [\*Perspectives\*](#) outlining the urgent need to strengthen penalties for those who vandalize our nation’s critical communications infrastructure or steal parts of it. Since then, the frequency and severity of these destructive acts have only escalated. From fiber cable cuts and copper thefts to cell tower sabotage, the damage caused by these crimes is creating harms that are rippling across our nation's communities – disrupting emergency services, Internet access, and essential business operations.

On the positive side, seven states (Alabama, Kentucky, Iowa, Indiana, Kansas, Montana, and Texas) have passed new laws to govern this activity, and others are looking to do the same. At the federal level, Representatives Lee (R-FL) and Veasey (D-TX) have introduced the [“Stopping the Theft and Destruction of Broadband Act.”](#)

But more legislative assistance and law enforcement attention cannot come soon enough. Below is a sample of twenty-one separate incidents reported across the country – all since the beginning of the year, each illustrating the profound impact of this growing crisis. These stories highlight why strong, enforceable laws – and swift enforcement action by state and federal policy makers

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– are essential to protect our nation’s critical communications networks and the millions of Americans who rely on them every day.

- ❖ Kent, Washington, January 2025: “WA Vandals Cause Comcast Internet Outage Across South King County”  
<https://www.fox13seattle.com/news/comcast-outage-south-king-county>
- ❖ Louisville, Kentucky, January 2025: “Copper Wire Theft Leaves Camp Taylor Residents Without Internet for Days”  
<https://www.whas11.com/article/news/community/capm-taylor-wire-theft-internet-outage/417-de05bffd-5d84-4195-8b7a-101132b6f68d>
- ❖ Kitsap County, Washington, February 2025: “Port Orchard Wire Theft Part of Trend That's Growing as Copper Prices Rise”  
<https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/news/2025/02/18/copper-wire-theft-in-washington-rising/78427171007/>
- ❖ Las Vegas, Nevada, February 2025: “Power Outage In Las Vegas Linked to Suspected Copper Theft”  
<https://news3lv.com/news/local/copper-theft-attempt-leads-to-power-outage-affecting-harry-reid-airport-with-delays>
- ❖ Austin, Texas, March 2025: “Spectrum Offers \$5,000 Reward for Tips on North Austin Cable Vandalism Suspect”  
<https://cbsaustin.com/news/local/spectrum-offers-5000-reward-for-tips-on-north-austin-cable-vandalism-suspect>
- ❖ Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, March 2025: “Philadelphia’s Love Park Portal Vandalized; 4 Suspects Sought for Stealing Copper Wire”  
<https://6abc.com/post/4-suspects-wanted-copper-wire-stolen-love-park-portal-center-city-philadelphia/15976794/>
- ❖ Greene County, Pennsylvania, March 2025: “Internet, Phone Service Restored in Greene County After Copper Theft Causes Outage”  
[https://www.heraldstandard.com/news/local\\_news/2025/mar/02/internet-phone-service-restored-in-greene-county-after-copper-theft-causes-outage/](https://www.heraldstandard.com/news/local_news/2025/mar/02/internet-phone-service-restored-in-greene-county-after-copper-theft-causes-outage/)
- ❖ DeKalb, County, Georgia, March 2025: “Copper Theft Strikes Again: South Dekalb County Residents Endure 24-Hour Internet Blackout”  
<https://www.fox5atlanta.com/news/copper-theft-strikes-again-south-dekalb-county-residents-endure-24-hour-internet-blackout>
- ❖ Kern County, California, March 2025: “Copper Wire Theft Suspect Arrested in Kern County After Pursuit, Stolen Items Found”

- <https://bakersfieldnow.com/news/local/copper-wire-theft-suspect-arrested-in-kern-county-after-pursuit-stolen-items-found-south-enos-lane-panama-highway-33-santa-barbara-california>
- ❖ Rome, New York, March 2025: “2 Charged with Attempted Copper Theft in Rome”  
[https://www.wktv.com/news/2-charged-with-attempted-copper-theft-in-rome/article\\_5dd8918c-f79f-11ef-84fc-cf9157b10f21.html](https://www.wktv.com/news/2-charged-with-attempted-copper-theft-in-rome/article_5dd8918c-f79f-11ef-84fc-cf9157b10f21.html)
  - ❖ Jacksonville, Florida, March 2025: “JSO: Suspects Posed as Utility Workers, Stole Fiber Optic Cables to Strip for Copper”  
<https://www.firstcoastnews.com/article/news/crime/jso-suspects-posed-utility-workers-stole-fiber-optic-cables-to-strip-for-copper/77-181f2287-d8b9-45dd-bc61-18139dec01e8#>
  - ❖ St. Louis, Missouri, April 2025: “Missouri Ranks 3rd In Telecom Vandalism as Industry Seeks Solutions to Protect Crucial Infrastructure”  
<https://www.bizjournals.com/stlouis/inno/stories/news/2025/04/17/spectrum-vandalism-protection-infrastructure-trade.html>
  - ❖ McDowell County, North Carolina, April 2025: “Two Marion Men Arrested, Charged for Theft and Vandalism of Utility Lines”  
<https://wlos.com/news/local/two-marion-men-arrested-theft-vandalism-utility-lines-mcdowell-county-downed-helene-community-assistance>
  - ❖ Levittown, Pennsylvania, April 2025: “Police: Two Sought After Verizon Wire Theft”  
<https://levittownnow.com/2025/04/02/police-two-sought-after-verizon-wire-theft/>
  - ❖ Harrison County, Texas, April 2025: “Copper Theft from Rusk, Harrison County Cell Towers Disables 911 Service for Some”  
<https://www.ketk.com/news/local-news/copper-theft-from-rusk-harrison-county-cell-towers-disables-911-service-for-some/>
  - ❖ Sacramento, California, April 2025: “Vandalism causes Xfinity outage in Sacramento area”  
<https://fox40.com/news/local-news/xfinity-outage-sacramento-vandalism-natomas-elkgrove-downtown-midtown/>
  - ❖ Kansas City, Missouri, May 2025: “Vandals Cut Spectrum's Fiber Optic Cables in Three Kansas City Metro Locations”  
<https://www.kmbc.com/article/kansas-city-spectrum-vandals-fiber-optic-cables-cut/64817186>
  - ❖ Houston, Texas, May 2025: “Northeast Houston Neighborhood Without Internet for Weeks, Service Providers Blame Copper Thieves”

<https://abc13.com/post/northeast-houston-neighborhood-internet-weeks-service-providers-blame-copper-thieves/16332560/>

- ❖ Jefferson County, Maine, May 2025: “Additional Charges Filed in Lincoln County Cable Theft Investigation”

<https://www.newscentermaine.com/article/news/crime/additional-charges-lincoln-county-cable-theft-investigation-maine/97-3aa664b4-8027-48e2-bbee-db161ef5afa5#>

- ❖ Honolulu, Hawaii, May 2025: “Police Blame Cell Tower Vandalism For Windward Oahu Network Disruption in Hawaii”

<https://www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/news/police-blame-cell-tower-vandalism-for-windward-oahu-network-disruption-in-hawaii/>

- ❖ Houston, Texas, May 2025: “Telecommunication Line Vandalism Causes Widespread Xfinity Outage In Houston Area”

<https://www.click2houston.com/news/local/2025/05/02/xfinity-out-multiple-houston-area-residents-reporting-outages/>

It should be evident that there's no time to waste.

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