

### Members of the Energy & Technology Committee:

I, Susan Huizenga, current Chairman of the Cable Advisory Council Comcast Branford and Statewide Video Council designee; DO NOT SUPPORT HB5814, An Act Concerning Community Access Television.

As an advocate of Community Access Television for 30 years, I wish I had the opportunity to either support the repeal Public Act. 07-253 or support a bill that better defines, fund and enables Community Access. Neither option is available in this short session. The outgrowth of inquiries on how to fix, what PA 07-253 broke, seems to have become an opportunity to further codify the limitations of 'video' services as acceptable and to dismiss some significant regulatory outcome of DPUC proceedings of the past few years.

I have submitted a list of concerns with this Bill and Public Act 07-253 and share this adaptation of FCC Commissioner Copps' remarks the 'Localism in Broadcasting' as it could pertain to Community Access.

We are making George Orwell proud. We claim to be giving Community Access a shot in the arm — but the real effect is to reduce access to a deep link in a world wide web of glib marketing campaigns, high priced attorneys and competition for 'the tired, poor, and huddled masses yearning to see the TV of their choice for a price they can afford.

We do this upon concluding many things: 1) localism is the cornerstone of our regulation 2) communities need access to valuable, locally responsive programming, 3) there is a presumptive need for communities to have community channels, 4) the flexibility of digital technology can 'better serve' the needs of the underserved 5) Community Advisory Boards are not conclusively a means of addressing local needs, unless they are representatives of all segments of the community, 6) periodic consultation is appropriate, and finally, 7) modification of certain rules, policies and practices may be necessary.

Reform is needed. But to paraphrase ~~Sen.~~ Fontana recent remarks about SB492: Do we need a chain-saw to cut through the complexity of this bill? Does it establish a level playing field, provide transparency and is it responsiveness to the public? I believe not.

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More than a decade has passed since PA 95-150 ensured that all communities in CT would have Community Access otherwise known as P.E.G., Public Education and Government

Access. This Access legislation was unprecedented in its provision to serve all residents of our State. Communities and providers had choices to make based on each community's definition of reasonable need. A variety of community access operations across the state were transformed. Some are thriving, most are surviving, and all are at a digital crossroads. Many are trying to balance the day-to-day demands of keeping speech free and accessible to all on shoe-string budgets while keeping one eye on the preservation of the rights of those they are trying to serve.

**PA 07-253 Concerns:**

- 1) Complexity of language in new law
- 2) Too many terms for carrier/distributors of TV
- 3) Opportunity to update and simplify language not taken
- 4) Complexity of multiple mandatory advisory councils and lack of clarity of roles
- 5) Lack of community representation in community advisory selection
- 6) Video provider is not required to provide a basic service
- 7) Video provider exempt from interconnection/start-up costs
- 8) Video provider exempt from provision of senior discounts,
- 9) Video provider technology limitations may not enable retransmission from all PEG locations
- 10) Cable opt out does not grandfather provisions of most recent franchise agreement
- 11) All language appears to lead back to FCC minimum channel capacity and funding
- 12) Cable Council funding remains same rate after a decade
- 13) Lessons Learned from mandated consumer studies and surveys not leveraged
- 14) Funds create competition between communities for funds, grant requests require greater overhead than disbursement systems
- 15) General feel that it was written from the video provider's point of view
- 16) Lack of fair competition
- 17) Lack of understanding of basic concepts of Community Access

**HB5814 Concerns**

- 18) The bill is not what it was expected to be
- 19) Overturns regulatory outcomes of months of state employee and citizen work
- 20) Changes allow for persons with conflicts of interest to influence management of Community Access
- 21) General feel that the bill was raised to pay off certain groups to get endorsement of U-verse limited PEG functionality
- 22) All the issues 07-253 are not resolved and may be further aggravated.