

TESTIMONY  
OF  
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**Introduction:**

My name is Bill Durand and I am the Executive Vice President and Chief Legal Counsel for the New England Cable & Telecommunications Association, Inc., otherwise known as NECTA. NECTA represents substantially all cable television operating and programming companies that serve Connecticut and the other five states in the region. NECTA respectfully submits testimony in support of Senate Bill 890, An Act Concerning Telecommuting.

Much of the testimony I will present on House Bill 6426 applies to Senate Bill 890. One of the laudable attributes of this bill is its focus **on adoption** of broadband. Our experience in focusing on closing the digital divide is the lack of opportunity for certain segments of society –not for broadband access- rather-the need for access to computers. This bill addresses that issue. As stated in our testimony on House Bill 6426 any incentives that are provided should be technology/provider neutral. If state grants are to be used to promote broadband deployment, they should be targeted to those areas where consumers lack access to broadband.

Subsidizing the deployment of broadband in areas where consumers already enjoy access to broadband service undermines competition. Giving state money to companies to provide broadband "on top" of existing providers punishes those who took risks to invest and who continue to bear the heavy burden of debt-capitalized investment.

Those who deployed broadband early – cable providers, phone companies, and others who took a chance – received no support, bore the entire risk of failure, and continue to service the debt that was incurred to place cables, poles, and electronics to provide broadband. If the government steps in and gives substantial cash benefits – credits or other subsidies – to another provider who delayed investment, and who will have no similar cost structure, then the government is punishing risk taking and destroying the investment of the risk taker.

We commend the sponsors for their efforts and look forward to working with the committee on this and other measures designed to improve broadband availability and adoption.