



**TESTIMONY**  
of the  
**CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES**  
to the  
**ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE**

February 17, 2009

CCM is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local governments - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 93% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate this opportunity to testify before you on issues of concern to towns and cities.

**CCM supports Raised House Bill 6426 "An Act Concerning Broadband Access."**

H.B 6426 creates a State-wide initiative program lead by the Department of Public Utility Control, The Office of the Consumer Council and the Broadband Internet Coordinating Council, to create a competitive Internet broadband network that is available to everyone (individuals, homes, businesses, non-profit agencies and municipalities) in the state.

Broadband is high-speed communication that includes DSL, Cable, Fiber-optic and Wireless technology. Broadband provides users the ability to connect to the internet and external databases at speeds over 1,000 times faster than dial-up line technology. Its implementation in town halls would dramatically reduce the rate of systems logging out of software applications and increase the capacity for transferring data. In a survey of Connecticut's towns and cities, 116 towns agreed that broadband technology is critical in order for Connecticut to remain competitive in today's global economy.

Those who can afford the most efficient broadband technology invest in constructing fiber-optic infrastructure in their community. Fiber optic technology consists of glass or plastic fiber cables, the capacity of which is only constrained by the ever increasing power of the computing technology at its end points.

Fiber-optic technology currently exists in a program called the Connecticut Education Network (CEN) which was created and funded by the State to be used exclusively by K-12 school districts, higher education campuses and libraries.

The CEN is a great advantage to those included in the network but it prevents municipalities from joining the state-funded fiber-optic network. As the CEN already runs through all municipalities in the state, the easiest way to extend broadband access to municipal governments would be to connect each municipal general government building to the fiber-optic CEN architecture. All municipalities would not only have a permanent form of high speed Internet access but also high speed intranetworking capabilities among the municipalities for technology services sharing.

Many municipalities still rely on outdated technology to transfer and store data that needs to be readily available to municipal residents. Constructing fiber-optic technology in the state would enable municipal town halls to share information at a much faster speed and introduce information technology to municipalities who cannot afford it without state aid.

If municipalities were allowed to allocate LoCIP funding for building fiber-optic infrastructure, the State would not have to create a new program to grant broadband funds to municipalities and would not dramatically affect existing funding for the program.

On May 17th 2008, the Department of Public Utility Control (DPUC) instituted a formal investigation to analyze methods of deploying access to high speed broadband technology in the state. CCM responded to this initiative by submitting a written statement asking the DPUC to recommend to the State Legislature:

- Extending membership of the Connecticut Education Network to municipalities and purposes
- Allowing municipalities to use Local Capital Improvement Program (LoCIP) Funds for broadband

Broadband technology is a key element to ensuring Connecticut's towns and cities remain competitive in today's digital age. At a time when competition is no longer just national but instead global, improving broadband technology is crucial to sustaining Connecticut's economy.

***CCM urges the committee to favorably report a bill that (a) extends membership of the CEN to municipalities and (b) allows municipalities to use LoCIP funds for broadband infrastructure.***

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