

**SENATE 23**

**TESTIMONY OF PAUL R. CIANELLI**

**THE NEW ENGLAND CABLE & TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION**

**THE ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE**

**SENATE BILL 23: AA ENHANCING EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 20, 2012**

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My name is Paul Cianelli and I am the President of the New England Cable & Telecommunications Association (NECTA). NECTA represents Connecticut's cable telecommunications companies which compete to provide advanced broadband, voice and video products and services to our state's business and residential consumers. NECTA appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony in support of sections 1 & 2 of Senate Bill 23. These sections will require the state's utilities to work with the Division of Emergency Management & Homeland Security (DEMHS) to develop and implement the state's emergency preparedness plan.

NECTA shares the Governor's and your Committee's interest in minimizing the utility service disruptions experienced by residents and businesses after severe weather events. Facing a fiercely competitive marketplace, we believe that it makes good business sense for cable operators to deliver highly reliable service to our customers. Over the last five years, the cable industry has invested nearly \$1 billion in infrastructure and equipment upgrades in Connecticut. We also consistently invest in outage restoration planning and training to ensure our personnel are effectively prepared to respond to major storm events.

During last fall's outages, we worked closely with DEMHS and the Public Utility Regulatory Authority (PURA) to coordinate our restoration activity. These agencies established state-sponsored mechanisms (Communications Restoration Task Force) that enabled us to work cooperatively to address operational challenges and to share information. With the assistance of these agencies, we were also able to streamline our communications with the electric utilities by stationing personnel at their Emergency Operations Centers so there could be a real-time exchange of restoration information. NECTA believes both of these processes were very helpful and we recommend incorporating them into the state's new emergency response plan.

NECTA recognizes the benefits of having government agencies and their private sector partners work together to pre-establish outage response procedures. In furtherance of this goal, cable operators are actively participating in the DEMHS working group process that is revising the state's emergency response plan (planning/training/exercise components). We believe this proposal will facilitate this ongoing process by strengthening DEMHS' authority to continue work with the utility sector to develop and implement this new plan.

We look forward to working with DEMHS and this Committee on this important policy matter.

Thank you.