Testimony of
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CTIA – The Wireless Association®
In Support of Connecticut Senate Bill 888
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Before the Connecticut Joint Committee on Energy and Technology

On behalf of CTIA-The Wireless Association®, the trade association for the wireless communications industry, I write in support of Connecticut Senate Bill 888 related to wireless broadband deployment. SB 888 would streamline siting processes for new wireless facilities and make available additional lands on which to site these facilities. This legislation would ensure that wireless providers have the administrative certainty when deploying wireless facilities, provide additional property to site facilities to meet consumer demand for wireless broadband services, and help ensure consumers can continue to access public safety services.

Over the last decade, wireless subscribership has risen nationally to more than 321 million wireless subscriber connections today. In fact, there are more than 3.3 million wireless subscriber connections in Connecticut. While the number of wireless voice subscribers has been growing quickly, the number of wireless broadband users is expanding even more dramatically. Currently, more than 93 percent of the wireless devices in the United States are data capable devices. Consumers are not only using devices for talking and texting, but they are increasingly using wireless broadband to access the Internet. With more consumers adopting wireless broadband than any other Internet access technology and with continuing demand for more wireless services, wireless providers need to have the necessary infrastructure in place to meet consumer demand. SB 888 will help accommodate consumer demands while assisting in the deployment of next generation wireless services.

Wireless providers continue to deploy and upgrade networks to meet increasing consumer demand for wireless broadband services and help ensure continued high quality network performance. By 2012, U.S. wireless carriers' cumulative capital expenditures totaled more than $348 billion, an increase of more

than $25 billion over the preceding 12-month period despite the challenging economic climate.[1] From providing energy, education, and government solutions, wireless broadband promises to increase efficiency, connectivity, and information-sharing. The economic and societal benefits spurred by wireless broadband require a robust infrastructure backbone, which in turn requires the ability to deploy wireless facilities where they are needed.

Wireless communications are also a key component of the nation's "9-1-1" emergency response system. CTIA estimates that there more than 400,000 wireless 9-1-1 calls made every single day. As the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) found, "the deployment of facilities without unreasonable delay is vital to promote public safety, including the availability of wireless 911, throughout the nation. The importance of wireless communications for public safety is critical, especially as consumers increasingly rely upon their personal wireless service devices as their primary method of communication."[2] Accordingly, SB 888 will help to ensure that consumers can continue to access vitally important public safety services.

Recent federal recognition of the importance of wireless infrastructure bears consideration by the Committee. In its National Broadband Plan, the FCC acknowledged that wireless infrastructure is critical for broadband deployment. The FCC's National Broadband Plan states that wireless networks rely on site deployment, and that securing rights to infrastructure deployment "is often a difficult and time-consuming process that discourages private investment."[3]

To expedite this process, the FCC established a "shot clock" requiring state and local governments to make final decisions on proposed wireless facilities on existing structures within 90 days and on new tower proposals within 150 days of receipt of a complete application.[4] FCC Chairman Julius

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[1] CTIA—The Wireless Association®, *Semi Annual Mid-Year Data Survey Results* (October 11, 2012), *available at: http://files.ctia.org/CTIA_Survey_MY_2012_Graphics-_final.pdf.*

[2] *See* Declaratory Ruling to Clarify Provisions of Section 332(c)(7)(B) to Ensure Timely Siting Review and to Preempt Under Section 253 State and Local Ordinances that Classify All Wireless Siting Proposals as Requiring a Variance (Nov. 18, 2009), *available at*: http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/view?id=7020393456.

[3] *Connecting America: The National Broadband Plan* at 127 (March 17, 2010), available at: http://www.broadband.gov/plan/.

[4] *See supra* in Note 2.

Genachowski pointed to the red tape and delays entailed in the wireless siting process, and observed that expediting wireless siting could unleash $11.5 billion in new broadband infrastructure investment in 2011-2012.[5] In February 2012, Congress also acknowledged the critical role of the timely deployment of wireless facilities by requiring streamlined state and local government approval for such facilities on existing structures.[6] SB 888 is consistent with these national policies that encourage wireless broadband deployment. By streamlining processes for new wireless facilities and providing additional property on which to site these facilities, SB 888 would encourage the deployment of wireless infrastructure to meet ever increasing consumer demand.

In closing, as wireless providers deploy the next generation of high-speed wireless broadband services to address exploding consumer demand, they need the administrative certainty to construct new infrastructure. These facilities are increasingly critical to network performance as users continue to demand these high-speed services and to ensuring continued consumer access to critical public safety services. By streamlining approval processes and freeing up potential land for these facilities in Connecticut, SB 888 would enable the deployment of wireless facilities in the state. For these reasons, we respectfully request the Committee's approval of SB 888.

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[5] Prepared Remarks of FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski at the Broadband Acceleration Conference, Washington, D.C., at 3 (Feb. 9, 2011), *available at* http://fjallfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-304571A1.pdf.

[6] *See* Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 § 6409(a) (A "state or local government may not deny, and shall approve, any eligible facilities request for a modification of an existing wireless tower or base station that does not substantially change the physical dimensions of the tower or base station") ("Middle Class Tax Relief Act § 6409(a)"), *available at:* http://docs.house.gov/billsthisweek/20120213/CRPT-112hrpt-HR3630.pdf.