

# Capitol Region Council of Governments

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**DATE:** MARCH 11, 2013  
**TO:** CHAIRMEN AND MEMBERS OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
**FROM:** MARY GLASSMAN, CHAIRMAN, CRCOG POLICY BOARD  
LYLE D. WRAY, PHD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
**SUBJECT:** SENATE BILL NO. 847, AN ACT CONCERNING THE COMMISSION FOR TECHNOLOGY ADVANCEMENT

For more than 40 years, the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) has served Hartford and 30 surrounding municipalities and helped them gain significant efficiencies in the spending of taxpayer dollars through a wide variety of cooperative purchasing and other regional service sharing initiatives.

The next “big thing” for efficient service sharing at the regional level is high speed broadband internet access for all 30 towns and cities to enable the next generation of opportunities. Access to the Nutmeg Network (formerly CT Education Network - CEN) is an important first step to this next generation opportunities for local government efficiency, including local property tax relief.

Broadband fiber access is a catalyst for gaining even greater efficiencies at the local government level. Municipal communication during a natural disaster or other major public event requires the use of communication technology and shared access to information -- public works, town managers and others join police and fire personnel as local responders that all need to work together. The need for real-time sharing of many types of information requires broadband network connections across all aspects of municipal government, not just public safety and schools. Universal municipal access for all parts of town government to broadband fiber is essential for the realization of Connecticut’s stated goal that BTOP (Broadband Technology Opportunities Program) establish a “comprehensive community infrastructure.”

The Nutmeg Network broadband fiber is a great opportunity for the general government function of municipalities. But the current oversight structure of the network is solely focused on education. Now that CEN has transitioned to be an open access network (the Nutmeg Network), general local government must be included in decision-making process of the network. SB 847, An Act Concerning the Commission for Technology Advancement revamps the former Commission for Educational Technology and balances the representation overseeing the Nutmeg Network between education and general local government.

*Testimony Regarding Raised Bill No. 847, AN ACT CONCERNING THE COMMISSION FOR  
TECHNOLOGY ADVANCEMENT*

In order to encourage full municipal participation and create a transparency with the rate structure, we would encourage two additional changes to the legislation. Specifically to replace the “reasonable rates” language to “rates at least as favorable as state agency rates.” We also ask that the rate setting process be required to be transparent and in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Act (UAPA). We believe these two changes will set up the best possible long-term rate structure and regulatory environment for the state to leverage broadband technology to increase government efficiency.

We strongly support this bill with the changes mentioned and encourage your favorable action.