



**Testimony
Betsy Gara
Connecticut Council of Small Towns
Before the Energy Committee
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The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) *supports* **SB-572, AN ACT CONCERNING GIGABIT INTERNET ACCESS.**”

By facilitating the rapid development of a high speed gigabit Internet infrastructure in municipalities across the state, SB-572 will help improve our local economies and expand our revenue base.

Recently, the state’s Nutmeg Network was extended to include municipal facilities in addition to schools, libraries and public safety facilities. Towns are piloting projects to utilize the network to improve the efficiency and delivery of municipal functions, such as data storage and back-up, GIS mapping, and payroll and accounting.

Towns exploring opportunities to use technologies to reduce costs and improve efficiencies understand how vital it is to move forward with the development of faster, cheaper Internet access. Many towns have also heard from businesses in their communities that increasing access to ultra-high-speed gigabit networks and reducing the cost of such networks must be a priority.

As a result, a number of small towns have signed onto the effort to bring ultra-high speed Internet access to Connecticut, including Avon, Barkhamsted, Berlin, Bloomfield, Branford, Canton, Colchester, Durham, East Haddam, Farmington, Guilford, Haddam, Hebron, Lisbon, Madison, Mansfield, New London, Plainville, Ridgefield, Rocky Hill, Simsbury, Somers, South Windsor, Thomaston, Waterford, West Haven, Westport, Windham, and Woodbridge.

These towns recognize the importance of high-speed, reliable Internet access to attract and retain businesses, enhance educational opportunities and respond to the needs of residents. By moving forward with a public/private partnership to build the network, this bill will help make Connecticut and our towns more competitive.