

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD

Testimony Submitted by Scott A. Hanley to the Energy and Technology Committee

In Support of Proposed House Bill No. 5555

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE PUBLIC, EDUCATIONAL AND GOVERNMENTAL
PROGRAMMING AND EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENT ACCOUNT
(PEGPETIA) GRANT PROGRAM**

February 19, 2015

Senator Doyle, Representative Reed and members of the Energy and Technology Committee,

The Town of Wallingford supports Proposed HB No. 5555 as a means to permit the resumption of the PEGPETIA grant program as delineated by *Public Act 07-253, An Act Concerning Certified Competitive Video Service*. PEGPETIA is an exceedingly valuable mechanism to fund equipment and technology upgrades at Public, Educational and Governmental Access (PEG) operations, schools, libraries and governmental facilities throughout the state. The Town has used the program to upgrade meeting coverage capabilities and hopes to do so in the future to replace aging studio and distribution equipment.

By reallocating all of the collected funds for fiscal years 2014 and 2015, budget deficit mitigation has contravened the intent of the PEGPETIA program. The deregulation of the cable industry during the 2007 legislative session effectively eliminated franchise renewal proceedings and the opportunity to secure commitments from cable companies to fund the replacement of equipment. The PEGPETIA program, as devised, sought to replace those obligations and guarantee an ongoing source of monies to maintain production and distribution capabilities at PEG facilities. During the time PEGPETIA was untouched, it not only brought twenty-first century efficiencies to classrooms and public buildings, but also served as a lifeline for PEG centers as they worked to sustain the benefits of community-based training and programming.

PEGPETIA gives video service providers an effective means to meet their public interest obligations by investing in the communities from which they collect significant business revenue. The monies generated from subscribers and distributed via the program provide local residents with daily benefits including, but not limited to, dependable media access to government services and meetings, election

information, emergency notifications, foreign language programming, access to student activities, hands-on technology training, and coverage of noteworthy cultural events. Additionally, PEGPETIA benefits the local economy as the funds are spent purchasing goods and services from area businesses.

The Town of Wallingford respectfully requests that the Committee endorse the intent of Proposed HB No. 5555 and seek a means to protect PEGPETIA within this year's budget deliberations.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Respectfully submitted,

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