

TESTIMONY OF ERIC J. BROWN  
DIRECTOR OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY  
CONNECTICUT BUSINESS & INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

before the

ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

February 10, 2015

Good afternoon. My name is Eric Brown and I serve as director of energy and environmental policy with the Connecticut Business & Industry Association (“CBIA”). CBIA’s mission is to work with our members and public officials to make Connecticut a more attractive location for business investment in order to grow jobs and economic opportunity for those who live here. Our members include businesses from across the state of all sizes and from nearly every industry in Connecticut.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit **comments regarding Proposed Bill 572, An Act Concerning Gigabit Internet Access.**

CBIA is very supportive of Connecticut having an extensive, reliable and affordable broadband internet system that meets the needs of Connecticut’s businesses and citizens. But the fact that in its current form, the bill is but a one-sentence “placeholder”, is itself indicative of the need for significant additional deliberation and that many questions are yet to be fully considered.

Among them, from our perspective:

1. With Connecticut being ranked in several comparisons as having one of the best broadband systems in the country and the world, what are the specific deficiencies this bill is intended to address?
2. What specific statutory changes do the bill’s sponsors contemplate are necessary to “facilitate” addressing those deficiencies?

3. If the bill's sponsors contemplate the need for more investment in Connecticut's broadband system beyond what current providers are investing, who would pay for such additional investment?
4. If the concept is to attract private capital from additional private-sector companies not already investing in Connecticut's broadband system:
  - a. Why are these companies not already coming into this space in Connecticut and making those investments?
  - b. Are there significant statutory or regulatory barriers to them doing so?
    - i. If yes, will the bill focus on reducing those barriers?
    - ii. If not, what do the bill's sponsors anticipate will incentivize additional private sector investment beyond current investments? How much will those incentives cost? Who will pay for the cost of those incentives?
5. What is the population and location of citizens and businesses in Connecticut that need or are even interested in obtaining 1 Gig service that do not already have it? (Of course everyone would want it for free or a nominal price – even if their internet needs don't come close to utilizing 1Gig. If the goal is to create such an artificial economic marketplace, again, how much will that cost and who will bear those costs?).
6. Will those who do not need and are not interested in utilizing 1 Gig service be asked to subsidize incentives in order to provide it to others at a lower price?

These are a few of the many questions CBIA feels need to be discussed with a broad set of stakeholders prior to moving forward with any statutory changes. We would be happy to participate in those discussions. Without a clear, thorough and transparent discussion of these and related issues, we would urge that this committee not move forward with changing a system that, at least by some measures, is a national and international success.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.