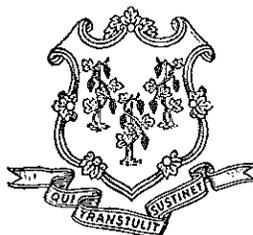


**SENATOR BETH BYE**

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**State of Connecticut**  
**SENATE**

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Appropriations Committee

*Vice Chair*  
Childrens Committee

*Member*  
Education Committee  
Judiciary Committee  
Legislative Management Committee

February 10, 2015

**Testimony to the Joint Committee on Energy and Technology**  
**RE: SB 572 An Act Concerning Gigabit Access**

Senator Doyle, Representative Moore, Senator Formica, Representative Ackert, and members of the Energy and Technology Committee,

My name is Beth Bye, State Senator representing the 5<sup>th</sup> District Towns of West Hartford, Farmington, Burlington, and Bloomfield.

I am here this afternoon to testify in support of SB 572. There is a joke in my family – “no one say gig” – because that one word can get me talking, explaining, and raise my excitement immediately. For the last two years, I have been working in concert with the Consumer Council, DECD, Mayor Harp, Deputy Mayor Cantor, and the Comptroller in an effort to make Connecticut the first Gigabit State. The topic is endlessly fascinating and complicated. It holds such potential for our state, and once I start talking about this, I find I sometimes cannot stop. I will try really hard to contain myself to three minutes here today.

I first learned of the gigabit potential in the living room of a constituent who was explaining to me why West Hartford was not using a \$50 million dollar network that he had donated to the town for anything other than connecting the town hall to the schools, firehouse, and library. In 2013, it seemed silly to me that West Hartford was sitting on such an asset, which was mostly untapped.

Working with the Town Manager, Corporation Council, Deputy Mayor Cantor, and the Office of Consumer Council, whose interest is in helping consumers, we were able to make a very small but important change in the statutes. This change would allow towns to use their “Gain” on the telephone poles for any purpose, not just municipal purposes. This change will help my community, and all Connecticut communities take advantage of their municipal gain in order to build out networks if they so choose.

Since that time, the Office of Consumer Council has been conducting meetings with businesses, towns, and state, regional and national leaders in order to puzzle through Connecticut’s broadband needs. These meetings have also addressed how a high speed network can be developed throughout the state that will be affordable.