



**Written Testimony Provided By**

**Bruce W. Carlson, President and CEO, Connecticut Technology Council**

**To the Energy and Technology Committee**

**Concerning SB 572**

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

My name is Bruce Carlson, and I am President of the Connecticut Technology Council. The Connecticut Technology Council is a statewide association of technology oriented companies and institutions, providing leadership in areas of policy advocacy, community building and assistance for growing companies. Our mission is to help shape the environment where technology companies can start and grow in Connecticut.

I am writing today to offer comments on SB572, An Act Concerning Gigabit Internet Access. This is an important issue that will drive the future of the State's economic growth for years to come.

First let me lay out a goal that any effort, either legislative or otherwise, should strive to meet, **ubiquitous, affordable, high speed broadband service throughout Connecticut.**

Thanks to the investment of the private and public sectors, Connecticut enjoys the distinction of being one of the most wired states. From that perspective we are the envy of many in the country. Between the Nutmeg Network which has fiber optic drops in every town in the State, to the significant investment that has been made by the local Internet Service Providers (ISP) we are on the leading edge of available broadband. However, available broadband is not the goal, and we need to move quickly to meet the goal stated above and stay competitive with other parts of the country.

Disruption is taking place throughout the country, leading to wider access, more affordable broadband than we have in Connecticut. That disruption is coming from the private sector with companies like Google which is wiring and providing service to metropolitan areas like Kansas City, MO and KS, Austin, Texas, and Provo Utah. Google has announced its intentions to be in 14 more metropolitan areas with the next 4 being started in 2015. The public sector is also stepping up with municipalities taking this issue into their own hands as shown by the over 100 towns and cities identified on the Next Century Cities website <http://nextcenturycities.org>. The difference between what is



being built in these jurisdictions and what we have in Connecticut is exponential. Promises of tweaking service to maximize the life and efficiency of existing copper wires are good for the very near term, but will not be competitive overall.

In some places, the availability of affordable, ubiquitous, high speed broadband has been around long enough to see what difference is being made. In Kansas City, they have StartUp Village, an organic living and working environment of entrepreneurs that have all moved into the first Google fibered neighborhood. StartUp Village houses start up IT companies, mostly started by entrepreneurs that came to Kansas City explicitly to have access to the gigabit service being offered. In the minds of the economic development folks in Kansas City, this is just the beginning as some of the original companies have grown into bigger spaces outside the “village”. Chattanooga which put in its own municipal network, has seen a growth in companies moving in from nearby locations. This is causing consternation in Tennessee as jurisdictions without broadband are complaining about Chattanooga’s unfair advantage for recruitment of firms. In Independence Oregon (pop. 8000), a rural farming community in the heart of Oregon, Intel is putting in a research facility solely because of the high speed broadband service available there.

The world is changing outside our borders. The good news for Connecticut is that New England as a whole has been somewhat immune to the change. We have the chance to be the first to do something on a large enough scale to see the type of economic development being enjoyed in other places. Our location between Boston and New York population centers, especially of millennials, could play to our advantage if we had ubiquitous affordable high speed broadband. Its happening in Kansas City, why not here in Stamford, Bridgeport, New Haven or Hartford. With the Nutmeg Network in place, we can build from that rather than a number of jurisdictions that have to start from scratch.

A final point that bears making is that wherever affordable, high speed broadband has been built and offered, property values have increased. Anecdotally, I know people in Kansas City that are looking to move to another neighborhood, and one of the primary considerations is whether that neighborhood is a “fiberhood”, using the Google lingo.

Getting from where we are today to meeting the goal will not be an easy or painless process. The CTC has among its members both the users that are clamoring for the ubiquitous, affordable, high speed broadband and the providers who may have trouble meeting this goal using traditional business models.



The CTC stands ready to participate in this debate wherever it can. As the leading technology association, having this goal met and how it is met is of critical importance to our members and to the future economic development of Connecticut.

Thank you.