



March 15, 2016

Senator Hartley, Representative Perone, Ranking Members, and Members of the Commerce Committee,

My name is Bruce Carlson and I am President and CEO of the Connecticut Technology Council. I am delighted to be here today to speak to Bill #445, An Act Establishing A Bioscience and Health Data Network Collaborative Task Force.

The Connecticut Technology Council is a technology industry association which represents technology companies in many different industry verticals, and of various different sizes from start ups to companies that are our household names like United Technologies, Medtronic, and Pitney Bowes. Many of the industry verticals that we represent are part of the proposed Task Force.

When you represent such a diverse group of companies, sometimes it is difficult to find those areas that are of common interest. This past fall the CTC put together a public policy agenda that would drive our efforts in this current legislative session and beyond. The top 3 issues in that public policy agenda are Talent and Workforce, Growth Companies, and IT Infrastructure. Raised Bill speaks directly to our interest in Growth Companies and IT Infrastructure and indirectly to Talent and Workforce.

Underlying the bill is the concept that Connecticut is uniquely positioned with 3 of the top 5 health care insurers in the country, strong health care providers with our hospitals and physician networks, and health care researchers at UCONN, Yale, Jackson Labs, and the Mt. Sinai Genomics Research Center. Up to this point we haven't found a way to bring all of those interests or stakeholders together to find ways to leverage economic development in Connecticut. This Task Force is an opportunity for industry experts from various industries to collaborate and develop the critical synergies needed to fully exploit our advantage..

For the last 2 years, Jackson Labs has helped establish Connecticut as a thought leader on health care innovation through the 2 Forums on HealthCare Innovation that they have produced. Having attended both of these forums, I believe that there is a consensus that the future of healthcare innovation is data analytics rather than new scalpels. However, to take full advantage of our uniqueness we need a robust IT infrastructure over which that data can travel and means to be able to crunch it.

At the direction of the Board of the CTC, I have been trying to find ways to bring focus to the idea that CT's IT Infrastructure is an economic development advantage, but we need to understand it and market it to allow for that advantage to bring benefit. For instance, Ohio takes out a full page ad in the Wall Street Journal touting it 100 gigabit fiber optic backbone. That's great for them, but we are much further along in our fiber optic network than they are, we just aren't taking out ads talking about it.

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So we have the companies, we have the network, now we need to make it happen. As much as I appreciate the bill calling for a Task Force, let me suggest that maybe we can move faster than that, and time is of the essence as other states are working hard to catch up to what we have. I suggest that, along with charge that this bill gives to the Task Force, that we also have them be an advisory group to the development of Digital Health Innovation Corridor that can be under development while the Task Force explores how we can harness the benefits of collaboration of these industries toward economic growth.

What is an Innovation Corridor?

Here is a paper on the topic by Michael Enright, Global Expert on Innovation Corridors.

http://www.lscgrowthcommission.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ENRIGHT_EXPERT_PAPER_01.pdf

In this paper he says that to build an innovation corridor that is a competitive location for business and talent you need:

- World Class Infrastructure
- Appropriate Industrial/Business Sites
- Trained Workforce with multiple skills
- Attractive working and living spaces

Other important lessons that can be drawn from this paper are:

- the importance of corridors and nodes;
- what can be done in compact economic regions;
- the need to match regional needs with jurisdictional firepower;
- the importance of getting a range of stakeholders involved in regional development initiatives;
- the importance of branding and self-awareness to promote regional development;
- the rationales for intervention by a group such as the Consortium; and
- the potential for “cluster thinking” to inform regional development efforts.

Cleveland is a great example of putting in an innovation corridor that stimulates not only the health care sector it is targeted to but fosters economic development from a number of different sectors. You can read about it here:

<http://www.healthtechcorridor.com/what-does-100-gig-mean-for-the-city-of-cleveland/>

http://www.cleveland.com/business/index.ssf/2014/11/businesses_along_clevelands_he.html

Industries that Cleveland is looking to attract or build are medical imaging, Research and Development, Video Streaming, and Data Mining. Already in the Innovation Corridor that they have set up are the University Hospitals, Data Center, Big Data companies like the one that has set up an EMR searchable data base for the hospital system and an incubator/accelerator, all taking advantage of the 100 gigabit connection.



How can we translate that here?

As I mentioned before, we have all the elements to have digital health be a robust economic development driver for Connecticut. My suggestion is that we look at the corridor from New Britain to Hartford (the FastTrack Corridor, if you will) and pilot an Innovation Corridor project there. Attached is a rendering of a fiber optic loop in the corridor that is almost all built at this point. Running diagonally through this Corridor is another 100 gigabit line that is managed by the Connecticut Education Network (CEN).

If it were possible, I would ask the Committee to consider modifying the language of the bill to authorize a pilot project with the stakeholders listed as an advisory group to the project. Since the pilot would be located in about 5 towns, New Britain, Newington, Farmington, West Hartford, and Hartford, we would need a cross jurisdictional entity to run the pilot. Possibly authorize the Department of Economic and Community Development to sponsor the pilot and determine the appropriate entity to operate it.

The goal of the pilot would be to determine that the availability of ultrafast high speed affordable broadband is an economic catalyst. As public private partnership we could take some of the risk out of the provision of the network, keeping the network private. I have a number of thoughts about how this Innovation Corridor could be attractive to businesses, but these are details that the Advisory Group could and should weigh in on as well.

For the purposes of the Commerce Committee, I also believe that an intended consequence of developing this pilot would be the promotion and acceleration of transit oriented development along the CT Fast Track line. Since we have a 100 gigabit backbone running right down the railroad line there, we should build out from that line. This would increase traffic and allow for innovation districts where residents could live, work, and play at each of the stops.

The Commerce Committee through this bill has taken a big step toward helping Connecticut's future economic growth. If we added the Innovation Corridor pilot idea to the bill, that future could be realized even sooner.

I look forward to answering any questions that you might have.

