

Bill No 286 MARCH 1, 2016

AN ACT CONCERNING THE PUBLIC, EDUCATION AND GOVERNMENTAL PROGRAMMING AND EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENT ACCOUNT (PEGPETIA) GRANT PROGRAM AND MUNICIPALLY OPERATED EDUCATION AND GOVERNMENT ACCESS CHANNELS.

The Cable Advisory Council of Area 15 (CAC-15), serving the ten northern towns of Hartland, Granby, East Granby, Suffield, Windsor Locks, Enfield, East Windsor, Somers, Stafford and Union is submitting this e-testimony in support of Bill No. 286.

Several of the towns within our cable franchise area have been recipients of past PEGPETIA grants resulting in increased production of local government and public access programming - exactly what the legislature's original intent of this program was. With PURA halting applications in March 2015 due to lack of access to PEGPETIA funds, several applications under development in these towns could not go forward.

While the funding for PEGPETIA comes from a gross earning tax on the providers, it is of course cable subscribers who have been passed on this tax and are actually the funding source. Currently these consumers in CAC-15 are paying \$.31 as "CT Peg Gross Earning Fee" in their monthly bill to Cox Communications. While this amount may seem trivial on an individual basis, state-wide PEGPETIA funding has resulted in millions of dollars accrued for the specific purpose of promoting and improving PEG access programming and educational technology initiatives by Boards of Education. As it now stands consumers are paying into a specially directed fund, which the legislature has ultimately diverted from the original statutory provisions. This "raiding the cookie jar" has to stop.

The Energy and Technology committee has the opportunity to be transparent by moving forward and supporting Bill No. 286 thereby restoring the \$4,200,000 to PEGPETIA.

Sincerely,

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Chairman
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