



**Testimony of
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Opposition to Connecticut House Bill 5504
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Before the Connecticut Joint Energy and Technology Committee

Co-Chair Doyle, Co-Chair Reed, and members of the Committee, on behalf of CTIA, the trade association for the wireless communications industry, I write to respectfully express our opposition to House Bill 5504. House Bill 5504 amends existing law to require the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) to hold a "public information session" if construction of a wireless facility "has not commenced construction three years from the date of issuance of the certificate." We are concerned such a provision could hamper wireless facility deployment in Connecticut.

Wireless networks and the ability to deploy and update existing networks is paramount to CTIA members. This is particularly true in Connecticut as wireless subscribers have skyrocketed 174% since 2000.¹ These wireless subscribers are not just making voice calls, but are consuming more bandwidth as new applications, devices and technologies come online. In order to meet this demand, as of December 2014, wireless carriers have invested over \$32 billion in capital improvements to provide the coverage and wireless services our consumers have come to expect.² Enactment of policies, such as those espoused by House Bill 5504, will hinder CTIA's members' ability to expeditiously deploy new wireless facilities.

Today, the process in which a wireless facility location is identified and then constructed is time-intensive. In Connecticut, search rings that require new towers typically take

¹ FCC Local Telephone Competition: Status as of December 31, 2013, published October 2014, https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-329975A1.pdf, last accessed 3/8/2016.

² CTIA Semi-Annual Wireless Industry Survey, June 2015, <http://www.ctia.org/your-wireless-life/how-wireless-works/annual-wireless-industry-survey>, last accessed 3/8/2016.



upwards of two years to identify, lease and obtain a Certificate from the Council. The entitlement process, which is unique, can be quite variable and involve substantial risk to capital as applied to any given search ring and investment in network improvements. Once a Certificate is granted by the Council, it typically takes another six months or more to design tower foundations, obtain administrative approval by the Council of a Development and Management Plan, process and record utility easements and finalize construction drawings. Application for and final issuance of a building permit by the municipality can be several months of additional time. Additionally, depending on weather and any environmental conditions or construction restraints (e.g. limitations on development due to species/habitats etc.), the project may be delayed from completion. Indeed, construction itself and securing Ethernet to the tower to get the tower facility into actual operation typically involves several additional months. All told, the timeline for most tower applications is a minimum 2-3 year investment of time and resources before being made operational.

It is important to note that when the Council issues a Certificate for wireless facilities, it is issued with a standard condition that the Certificate will expire within eighteen months from issuance unless construction is completed or the time to complete otherwise extended by the Council. The Council's standard condition provides that Certificate holders who apply for extensions of time to complete construction of a tower facility must do so in writing a few months prior to expiration. Such extension requests are typically reviewed by Council staff and then placed on an agenda of the Council for a full agency vote. Generally, it is CTIA members' experience that at least one six-month extension to certificates issued by the Council is needed in order to complete construction. The Council routinely grants such extensions.

As proposed, House Bill 5504 would severely interrupt today's processes. Rather than serve as an "incentive" for industry to construct wireless facilities within this 3-year timeline, House Bill 5504 could have the opposite effect and, instead, drive capital



investment out of the state for failure to adhere to these proposed timelines. Furthermore, no case has been made that these existing processes are insufficient and need to be changed.

In closing, as noted, wireless demand continues to soar and a robust wireless network is needed in order to accommodate this demand. As such, enacting policies comparable to those found within House Bill 5504 will impede wireless facility deployment in Connecticut. For all the reasons described herein, we respectfully ask the Committee to reject House Bill 5504.