

CT GENERAL ASSEMBLY – ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

AN ACT CONCERNING THE : **Raised SB 286**
PEGPETIA GRANT PROGRAM AND :
MUNICIPALLY OPERATED E & G :
CHANNELS : March 3, 2016

WRITTEN TESTIMONY FROM NUTMEG PUBLIC ACCESS TELEVISION, INC.

On March 1, 2016, the Energy & Technology Committee (“Committee”) held a Public Hearing regarding the above-referenced raised senate bill to which Nutmeg Public Access Television, Inc. (“Nutmeg TV”) submitted testimony.

According to the Committee’s office, additional written material will be accepted for review until March 24, 2016. Nutmeg TV respectfully submits the following for consideration as the Community Access Provider (“CAP”) for the eight cities and towns of Avon, Berlin, Bristol, Burlington, Canton, Farmington, New Britain and Plainville and regulated by the Public Utility Regulatory Authority (“PURA”).

1. SB 286 Contains Two Very Different Issues

- Request to reinstate PEGPETIA Grant money
- Request to change the Statute to allow a city/town to leave their assigned TV station (CAP) and run their own

2. Problems with SB286 as Written

- Essential PEGPETIA funding will be held up by its inclusion with Section 2. which requires much further and closer examination leaving a severe impact on those in need and for whom the current legislation was intended.

3. Problems with Section 2.

- Cities/towns currently *have free use of equipment and channels* from the assigned CAP managed TV station
- CAPs were put into place for reasons, are identified in the Statue and are regulated by PURA.
- If a city/town requests a reassignment of a channel, PURA administers this in a docketed process. Approval of Section 2. would circumvent PURA. Nutmeg TV believes it is imperative that PURA oversee any reassignments to examine whether or not the request were in order or a potential take-over.
- Cable companies connect with CAP TV stations so programming can be viewed on their systems. Passing this legislation would mean that these companies would need to agree to connect many, many times with towns/cities and manage those connections which is very costly and redundant to systems already in place.

Closing

In the current legislation, Sound View Community Media, Inc. in Bridgeport, was the target (see Sec.2 Section 16-331ff [serving six municipalities, one of which has a population of more than one hundred thirty thousand]) but if changed this will negatively affect every third party CAP in the entire State of Connecticut.

Nutmeg TV is a regional CAP managing many cities and towns but believes that even town specific CAPS would be at risk. Any city or town could decide to run the channel separate from the CAP and this proposed legislation would allow them to do and the CAP would have no protection.

The requestor of SB 286 Section 2. was denied under PURA's docketed process and as a result seeks to change the Statute. Nutmeg TV echos West Hartford Community Television in that, "we encourage CAPs to develop collaborative relationships with towns to ensure that needs are being met" but adds that city/towns also need to be reasonable and work with the CAP already in place. Nutmeg TV cannot draw a conclusion about Wolcott's request with limited knowledge of the relationship between Wolcott and CAP Skye XIII in this situation but it is aware that Skye XIII has been found to be in compliance.

Respectfully Submitted,

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