

March 10, 2016

Honorable members of the Planning and Zoning Committee of the CT legislature,

I am submitting this testimony in opposition of S.B. 331, AN ACT ESTABLISHING A HIGH-SPEED INTERNET SERVICE PILOT PROGRAM.

I don't believe there is any merit in supporting this funding or this bill. There is no issue of affordable broadband at adequate speeds in Connecticut. Several studies, including ones from the telecommunications industry and the FCC have indicated that Connecticut has the second fastest internet speed in the country and high speed broadband is readily available (my provider already offers 1 gig). Yet those who want to waste money on this effort ignore reality and take a "don't confuse me with the facts" stance. They prefer to be overly dramatic and make emotional claims the state's communities will start to die. Consistent with my opposition to this bill, I also support the elimination of the Office of State Broadband that the governor has recently proposed.

Municipalities or state government should NOT be in this business. Most cities and towns don't have the technical staff needed to oversee, implement or manage this or the CtGig program. I prefer my town's (and state's) resources be spent on things that government should be in the business of – snow removal, public safety, education, and road repair, not on some unnecessary project like this that is better left to the private sector and that the private sector has indeed undertaken on its own. Passage of this bill will just create an additional burden on cities and towns that are already struggling to keep pace with the myriad of state mandates.

A taxpayer funded broadband internet system is a bad idea. This bill has requested \$20 million to fund that bad idea. In the meantime the governor is reducing state aid to municipalities by \$20 million. Twenty million dollars will buy a lot of teachers and police officers, or help reduce local property taxes. That is what we need, not this.

I urge you to reject this bill.

Nancy Perkins