



**Testimony
Betsy Gara
Connecticut Council of Small Towns
Before the Planning & Development Committee
March 10, 2016**

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) ***supports*** SB- 331 - **AN ACT ESTABLISHING A HIGH-SPEED INTERNET SERVICE PILOT PROGRAM**

By facilitating the rapid development of a high speed gigabit Internet infrastructure in municipalities across the state, SB-331 will help improve our local economies and expand our revenue base.

Many towns have heard from businesses in their communities that increasing access to ultra-high-speed gigabit networks and reducing the cost of such networks must be a priority.

As a result, a number of small towns have signed onto the effort to bring ultra-high speed Internet access to Connecticut, including Avon, Barkhamsted, Berlin, Bloomfield, Branford, Canton, Colchester, Durham, East Haddam, Farmington, Guilford, Haddam, Hebron, Lisbon, Madison, Mansfield, New London, Plainville, Ridgefield, Rocky Hill, Simsbury, Somers, South Windsor, Thomaston, Waterford, West Haven, Westport, Windham, and Woodbridge.

These towns recognize the importance of high-speed, reliable Internet access to attract and retain businesses, enhance educational opportunities and respond to the needs of residents. By moving forward with a public/private partnership to build the network, this bill will help make Connecticut and our towns more competitive.