



March 9, 2016

Planning & Zoning Committee
Legislative Office Building

RE: SB-331 High Speed Internet Service Pilot Program

Dear Honorable Members of the Planning & Zoning Committee,

Please accept this letter in support of S.B. 331, An Act Establishing a High-Speed Internet Service Pilot Program.

Farmington recognizes the value of this seed capital investment from the state to be used to start the process of developing plans and partners to build out a fiber network across underserved areas of the State.

Farmington has followed the CTgig Project and recognizes the potential leveraging of the state's matching grant program for municipal broadband projects. We believe that using this state seed funding, along with other local private funding, could be the foundation for a far larger investment in the state by fiber network investors.

Our municipalities need seed capital or financial backup from the state to develop feasibility studies and prepare themselves for their responsibilities as fiber network owners. Many municipalities will find it difficult to commit to the infrastructure investment necessary to provide the ultra-high-speed Internet service being demanded by our businesses, hospitals, and other consumers without a Pilot Program like this.

Farmington believes this pilot program is a very promising new model for ensuring greater access to high-quality broadband Internet. We see this as a significant step forward in creating competition and bringing high quality Internet access to everyone. The economic development and jobs creation issues facing Connecticut are obvious and Farmington believes that affordable high speed Internet access is a fundamental utility that is an essential and substantial physical element of any successful municipality.



Connecticut must become competitive in providing high speed Internet access. We believe that high speed access to the Internet is a utility that all towns, indeed all premises, must be assured of having at reasonable prices. We are eager to see this Pilot Program get passed into law, be funded, and let the competition for the successful proposals begin.

Thank you for your consideration of S.B. 331, An Act Establishing a High-Speed Internet Service Pilot Program.

Sincerely,



Kathleen A. Eagen
Town Manager
Town of Farmington

Cc:

Senator Beth Bye

Senator Terry Gerratana

Representative Brian Becker

Representative Michael Demicco