



**New England Cable & Telecommunications Association, Inc.**  
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STATEMENT OF THE NEW ENGLAND CABLE & TELECOMMUNICATIONS  
ASSOCIATION, INC. IN OPPOSITION TO SB 331

**Introduction**

The New England Cable & Telecommunications Association, Inc. (NECTA) is a regional trade association representing substantially all cable telecommunication companies in New England. In Connecticut, NECTA represents: Atlantic Broadband, Cablevision, Charter, Comcast and Cox.

As the State of Connecticut considers SB 331, which would appropriate twenty million dollars to establish a high-speed internet service pilot program, we think it is important to understand the capabilities of Connecticut's existing networks and our industry efforts to improve access and speed:

- Connecticut residents have access to among the highest broadband speeds in the country.
- Over the last 14 years, NECTA members have consistently increased speeds annually.
- Most consumers access the Internet over WiFi networks. Without access, speed does not matter. We are focused on expanding the availability and speed of WiFi networks.
- In 2016, NECTA members have begun testing DOCSIS 3.1, a system capable of delivering gigabit speeds to the consumer market.
- Our networks deliver products that support the businesses that drive economic development. We have the capacity to expand and enhance those products as new and different business needs emerge.
- We currently offer multi-gigabit (1-100 Gbps) Ethernet services to data driven businesses.

## **Goals**

NECTA members are focusing on these goals:

1. Continue to innovate and invest in our state-of-the art network, so that all consumers benefit from the most reliable broadband infrastructure, capable of delivering the highest speeds.
2. Close the digital divide.
3. Remain competitive by providing products and services consumers demand.

### **Goal One - Innovation and Investment**

NECTA members have collectively invested \$2 billion over the past seven years developing state of the art networks in Connecticut. These networks are successfully meeting the needs of public and private sector consumers and they can be scaled up to address future demand. Connecticut has an extensive array of privately operated gigabit networks in place running through 8,000 miles of fiber, capable of providing speeds in excess of 1 gigabit. The extension of this fiber network expands monthly. For business consumers, NECTA members can deliver bandwidth levels of up to 100 Gbps.

NECTA members have begun testing what is known as DOCSIS 3.1 which is critical technology to provide even faster, more reliable data speeds and features. DOCSIS 3.1 is capable of delivering 1 to 10 gigabit speeds and has the potential to benefit millions of homes, as opposed to targeted areas or corridors. NECTA members will use DOCSIS 3.1, or similar technology, to deliver gigabit speeds - at scale - to the vast majority of their residential customers.

### **Goal Two - Digital Divide**

The cable telecommunications industry of course understands that broadband represents a significant economic development opportunity. Access to the Internet is integral to jobs, education and our general ability to obtain information. It is also true that not everyone who has access to the higher broadband speeds adopts the service, because their hardware may operate only at slower speeds. As an industry, we are partnered with federal, state and local officials to address the digital divide. Through various initiatives we are making important progress.

Speed is not the only measure of high quality service. The fastest networks are only helpful to consumers if they can be accessed, that is why NECTA members are properly focused equally on expanding WiFi networks. *WiFi is the primary way* most consumers connect to the Internet. NECTA members have deployed 195,000 WiFi hotspots throughout Connecticut allowing consumers to access the Internet easily where and when they want. This number grows weekly.

### **Goal Three - Products and Services**

NECTA members have a natural interest in providing Internet speeds that meet the needs and demand of Connecticut consumers. Our business model depends on it. Our work has been recognized by the administration of President Barack Obama. The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy reports that 97.08% of Connecticut residents have access to broadband that is faster than 50 Mbps. That is the third highest score in the country.

([http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/broadband\\_report\\_final.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/broadband_report_final.pdf).)

The Federal Communications Commission last December said Internet service providers in the U.S. are, for the most part, supplying the connection speeds they advertise to consumers -- speeds have tripled in the last three years, according to an annual agency report. According to the FCC's fifth "Measuring Broadband America" report (<https://www.fcc.gov/reports-research/reports/measuring-broadband-america/measuring-broadband-america-2015>), the average maximum advertised speeds increased 94 percent from 37.2 megabits per second in September 2013 to 72 Mbps in September 2014, with cable download speeds specifically increasing from 12-20 Mbps in March 2011 to 50-105 Mbps in September 2014. Broadband delivered via fiber and cable went above average and advertised 25 Mbps speeds, *with New Jersey and Connecticut clocking in the highest average speeds of 57 and 47 Mbps respectively.*

Our membership has consistently increased speeds over the last decade, usually with little or no associated price increase. Currently, NECTA members offer residential subscribers a variety of speed tiers with the top speed levels ranging between 60 to 505 Mbps.

### **New Broadband Technologies**

Starry, a company founded by the former CEO of Aereo, Chet Kanojia, will sell wireless equipment that delivers wireless internet speeds up to 1 gigabit using a technology called "millimeter wave band active phased array." The service launched in New York City and is expected to be available in Boston this Summer.

Senator John Thune (R-S.D.) Chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee has introduced his "Mobile Now" bill which will push the FCC to study and open up millimeter wave bands for 5G wireless broadband. Wireless companies around the world are racing to bring 5G gigabit wireless service to market. They will be capable of providing gigabit service.

The marketplace, not government intervention, drives innovation, creates competition and protects consumers.

### **Conclusion**

The history of the U.S. broadband industry is one of competitors constantly challenging each other and spurring competitive responses. The marketplace is dynamic and it will continue to push phone companies, wireless providers, and cable companies to compete with continued intensity. Connecticut's twin advantages of having both advanced broadband infrastructure and a thriving competitive marketplace should carefully be considered before the state attempts to enter such a complex field.

Respectfully submitted,

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