



*News from:*  
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**COMPTROLLER LEMBO, CONSUMER COUNSEL KATZ AND  
SEN. BYE REMIND MUNICIPALITIES: FRIDAY DEADLINE TO  
JOIN GIGABIT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MOVEMENT**

Comptroller Kevin Lembo, Connecticut Consumer Counsel Elin Swanson Katz and state Sen. Beth Bye (D-West Hartford) today urged all municipal leaders in Connecticut to act by Friday to join a growing coalition of cities and towns calling on providers to establish ultra-high-speed gigabit broadband in their communities.

A band of Connecticut towns and cities – led by New Haven, Stamford and West Hartford – issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) in September that essentially seeks information from interested parties to deliver ultra-high-speed gigabit networks in every community.

Many more municipalities from throughout Connecticut have since joined the RFQ, at no cost to their communities, because gigabit broadband service will provide a strong economic development incentive to businesses and a more competitive utility landscape for all businesses and households that are suffering from rising utility rates, Lembo said.

“Gigabit broadband service would rapidly deliver information – serving as a superhighway for researchers, schools, businesses large and small and every household,” Lembo said. “It would be the ultimate economic assistance incentive program because it would reward all business and industries, new ones and those already established here, with a superior infrastructure and an open door.”

Katz said, “It is essential that as many municipalities as possible engage in this process and join together with industry to make Connecticut the first Gigabit State in the nation. Broadband is now an essential ingredient for all towns to be able to support the current

applications used by residents, businesses and community anchor institutions. Its development will promote progress, growth and innovation in numerous areas, including business development and jobs creation, health care, education and interactive e-government.”

Katz added, “Other parts of the country, and other parts of the world, are seeing the development of ultra-high-speed gigabit ‘Gig’ networks, yet no such projects are planned in the Northeast U.S. Our desire to compete with other regions, combined with the ultra-high-speed fiber network operated by the state that connects all 169 towns, the Nutmeg Network, has driven the need for all Connecticut towns to develop this super capacity of Internet access. The need for competitive gigabit Internet access requires public-private partnerships between towns and service providers – just as happened a century ago with the rollout of electric distribution to areas where private industry could not profitably serve customers.”

Bye said, “Connecticut has a great opportunity to lead the nation as the first gigabit state. This potential can be realized through local and state partnerships.”

Municipal leaders interested in joining the collective RFQ before the Friday deadline can access information here: <http://www.ct.gov/broadband/cwp/view.asp?a=4524&q=525910>. They can also call and email the Office of the Consumer Counsel (Attention: Bill Vallee) at [William.Vallee@ct.gov](mailto:William.Vallee@ct.gov) and 860-827-2905. Towns and cities can join by Dec. 12, 2014 and respondents’ proposals are due by Jan. 13, 2015.

A gigabit broadband network is capable of 1,000 megabit-per-second (Mbps) upload and download speeds. The current average speed in Connecticut is only 9 Mbps download and even slower upload.

Lembo pointed to the development of gigabit networks in areas like Kansas City, MO; Austin, TX; and Chattanooga, TN where such development is spurring new start-up communities and attracting new corporate residents. Meanwhile, customer service has improved and costs for high-speed broadband has been reduced from -- in some cases -- several thousand dollars a month to approximately \$70/month.

Connecticut municipalities that have already joined New Haven, Stamford and West Hartford on the RFQ include: Fairfield, Madison, Manchester, Meriden, Middletown, Milford and Norwalk. Additional municipalities that have expressed an interest in joining include Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Berlin, Bridgeport, Bristol, Burlington, Derby, Guilford, Naugatuck, New Britain, Newtown, North Haven, Oxford, Plainville, Plymouth, Seymour, Shelton, Southington, Thomaston, Waterbury, Watertown, Woodbury and Woodbridge.

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